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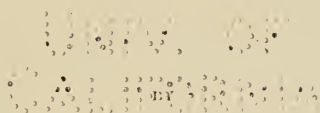
VERSE TRANSLATIONS.

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# OUTCAST ESSAYS

AND

## VERSE TRANSLATIONS.



SHADWORTH H. HODGSON, HON. LL.D. EDIN.

AUTHOR OF 'TIME AND SPACE,' 'THE THEORY OF PRACTICE,'  
'THE PHILOSOPHY OF REFLECTION,' ETC.

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## OUTCAST ESSAYS.

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WHY *outcast*?—The first was rejected by one periodical, the second by three. For the rest I ceased to solicit, judging that they would prove still more inadmissible. All were written because I had something I wished to say, whether or not it were in all points what any large number of the public might be counted on to read. Unsited, then, for periodicals, they may perhaps be tolerated as a volume. The Verse Translations may interest those who are accustomed to amuse themselves by a similar exercise.

January 1881.



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THE GENIUS OF DE QUINCEY.



## THE GENIUS OF DE QUINCEY.

EIGHTEEN years had passed since De Quincey's death, when the summer of 1877 brought the day so much to be dreaded for some, so much to be desired for others, when concerning him also the truth was at last to be told to the world. The admirable *Life* then published by Mr. Page\* gives as full and adequate an account of him, in all essential particulars, as in all probability ever will or can be given; and from that account De Quincey can be only a gainer. It is now obvious that the various events related by himself in his Confessions, Autobiographic Sketches, and other papers, which might have seemed to wear the colouring of romance, partly from the discontinuity of the narrative, but more, perhaps, from the embellishing style of the narrator, are not themselves romance but strict and sober fact. At least they so *fit in* with the rest of his surroundings, and with other events of his life now

\* *Thomas de Quincey. His Life and Writings. With unpublished Correspondence.* By H. A. Page. 2 vols. Hogg and Co., 1877.

made known to us, as to obtain an additional guarantee of authenticity.

This, however, is a small matter. What will justly be of far greater importance to the general reader is, that here at last De Quincey stands before us in the light of common day, is at last rendered intelligible, a human and not a mythical being, rescued from the atmosphere of legend, which had not only hidden but grievously distorted his image, by making him a mark for thoughtless exaggeration, unsubstantial and sometimes even apocryphal anecdote. Thus it is now made clear, that to describe him as "dreaming always," "his existence a series of dreams," "large in promises, helpless in failure of performance," to speak of him as "for once exerting himself to write," and to say that "the human mind" was the "one thing he knew anything about," is to give a picture which is the very reverse of the truth.

These things may to some seem trifles. Still, how they could ever have been said, in the face of the fourteen published volumes, revised by himself before his death, since increased to sixteen, and even then not including his *Logic of Political Economy*, surpasses my comprehension. Again, the imputation that the "credit of being *up* in German Meta-

physicians, Latin Schoolmen, Thaumaturgic Platonists, Religious Mystics, &c.," was a motive with De Quincey, or in the least degree led him to speak with a pretension of knowledge where he possessed none, becomes incredible from the true delineation of De Quincey's character now given by Mr. Page, and supported by the facts of his life.

My present purpose is solely with De Quincey as a writer; what the leading traits of his intellectual character are, what his rank, what his functions and achievements in literature; in one word with his genius. But for this purpose how great, I would almost say how indispensable, is a true picture of the man. It would not be so in every case, or at least not to the same extent; some men's writings are of plain and easy interpretation; but in De Quincey's case we have already seen how a mistaken appreciation of the writings may flow from a false imagination of the person. Mr. Stirling's theory of the cause of De Quincey's error concerning Kant (*Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1867), for from this it was that my last quotation came, will not hold water in presence of the true account of De Quincey's character now at last made public; some other explanation of that error (if error it be) must be sought; and I shall return to this point in its proper place, seeing

that it touches an important feature in De Quincey's literary reputation.

For my own part I may say, that I needed not to wait for Mr. Page's book to form a truer estimate of De Quincey's character than the current legends afforded. Not only as a relative of the family was I acquainted with the outlines of his life, but it was my privilege in the summer of 1853 to pass several days as a guest under his roof. His writings, those that I was then acquainted with, had been to me a source of the most valuable instruction; not of delight only, but of instruction and insight into regions which would else have remained closed to me. No one touches and lays bare the inmost heart of a subject like De Quincey. You are not kept at the surface or delayed with commonplaces, nor are you told the "thing to say" about it, as from a well-informed tutor getting up his pupils for the examination room. But you are taken by the hand and led into the centre of the subject by a direct though flowery path, the path probably by which the teacher himself had entered; and while you are thinking only of the flowers that strew, and the music that accompanies your route, suddenly the region is illuminated, and a panoramic view disclosed of its branching recesses.

The independence, the originality, the *proprio Marte* (to use a phrase often used by himself) of his exposition, is in every case the most remarkable feature of it. You have the subject treated at first hand. What struck me most when I saw him was the precise resemblance of his uttered to his written speech. The sentences flowed forth on the air, in manner and form just the same as they flowed along the printed page. They came spontaneously forth, embodying the associative act of thought as that action itself proceeded, and adapted, like that act itself, to the remarks of the interlocutors, in the ordinary course of give and take conversation. It was thought made visible; the verification and exemplification of the dictum—*the style is the man*.

He was, besides, the very soul of courtesy in conversation, studious not only to listen but respond to every remark, and make it bear its full fruit. I remember particularly his jubilant applause when an afternoon visitor reported a supposed epitaph on a great talker, beginning *Hic tacet*—. His fancy was captivated by the effect which the change of a single letter produced, the sudden heightening of the garrulousness which nothing but death could check, making it leap, as it were, to infinity, and at the same moment contrasting it with an infinite silence.

But after all, his own quiet flow of talk was the greatest charm. *Philomelus* was the name which afterwards in my own mind I gave him. For no description that I have read of him seems to me to surpass in truth and vividness the lines in which Thomson describes the bard *Philomelus* in the second canto of the *Castle of Indolence* :

“a little druid wight,  
Of withered aspect ; but his eye was keen,  
With sweetness mixed. In russet brown bedight,

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

He crept along, unpromising of mien.  
Gross he who judges so. His soul was fair,  
Bright as the children of yon azure sheen !”

There you have De Quincey ; at least in his later days. And few as are the touches, the portrait which they compose is that of a living and breathing mortal.

The key to the comprehension of De Quincey's place in literature may be given in few words. Two circumstances combined. First, he was by natural constitution of an intellectual turn, interested in the “things of the mind” genuinely and for their own sake ; “intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my schoolboy days,” he tells us in the Preface to the first edition of the *Confessions* (1822) ; and this claim is fully



borne out by the picture now presented in the *Life*. He sat down as it were in a theatre, to study and enjoy the spectacle of existence, past as well as present, with keen and eager curiosity, needing no alien stimulus derived either from the wish for applause or from the necessity of bread-getting; and resolved to see it with his own and not with others' eyes. His love for learning was self-originated, his judgment self-guided, his mind self-educated, at least if by self-education is meant, not an impossible independence of instructors, but the active use and choice of instruction by whomsoever offered, as contrasted with passive submission to a teacher's guidance.

But secondly, this aptitude and the knowledge which it had led him to acquire, he was afterwards compelled by circumstances, not led by choice, to turn to account in the way of bread-getting for himself and his family. He had to make the best of his acquirements, whatever they were, in that direction. He had therefore to write what would bring in immediate returns. He was a private student suddenly called upon to become a professional writer. The outward shape and form which his activity should take was thus determined for him; its peculiar independence and originality remaining what

they were, and would have been, had he never published a single magazine article.

What then was the value, what was the character, of that mental independence and originality? To answer this, we must see what that epoch was at which his career commenced. Now he was just fifteen at the commencement of the present century. The nineteenth century was dawning when his intellect was approaching its early maturity. Two great tendencies seem to divide between them the history of human mental development, though their ultimate causes are still a mystery; periods of criticism and demolition alternate with periods of creation and reconstruction. The nineteenth century has been a period of the latter class. Speaking only of England,—for to discuss the connection of English with Continental thought, or the causes of development which are special to the latter, would carry us too far afield,—speaking only of England, the nineteenth century was created, was made what it was, so far as the two vast fields of Literature and Philosophy are concerned, by a constellation of poets. *They* are the fathers of that reaction, that reconstruction, that revival of the *heart* as the unifying principle against the dispersing, criticising, *understanding*, as the end or τέλος of all action and of all

thought,—which we call the nineteenth century. A constellation of six stars, of primary magnitude though variously coloured light,—Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge ; Byron, Shelley, Keats.

Of these, two at least, and those the two of keenest radiance, shed their light over the total surface of human interests, and are philosophers as well and as much as they are poets,—Wordsworth and Coleridge. Of these it may be truly said, that the Englishman who has not entered through them into the nineteenth century has not fully and thoroughly entered therein. They are the Door of the century. For just as there are two great tendencies which give rise to alternating epochs of dissolution and reconstruction in the mental history of mankind, so also, and perhaps as a condition of its being so, are there two orders of individual minds ; minds genial, flexible, and imaginative, on the one side, minds ungenial, inflexible, ratiocinative, on the other ; minds that seem to be Nature's offspring and inherit her spontaneity, and minds that seem to be her handiwork and perform her tasks.

Foremost among the purely intellectual characteristics which distinguish these two orders of minds, are those of intellectual subtilty and intellectual acuteness. Subtilty is a perfection of the perceptive

powers, acuteness of the ratiocinative. A subtil mind is one that perceives minute differences and similarities, and minute shades of total character, in objects which it pictures; an acute mind perceives the remote logical consequences of given facts, whether traced backwards to causes or forwards to effects. The genial order of mind, when powerful, is subtil; the ungenial, when powerful, is acute. And according to the predominance of either order of minds, the period is stamped to which they belong; or rather, since the bulk of mankind consists always and everywhere of minds of the latter order, the greatest *talent* being but the highest grade of ordinary common sense, and there being always fifty minds that are acute for one that is subtil,—whenever minds of imaginative genius and subtilty appear in conjunction, their epoch is marked, and their influence is manifested, by the occurrence of a period of reconstruction. The eighteenth century was, intellectually, the reign of acuteness; the nineteenth the reaction of subtilty.

Through the door of Wordsworth and Coleridge, De Quincey entered, and then became one of the main channels by which their influence was diffused and made operative in moulding the thoughts of other men after the image of theirs. There is no-

thing more remarkable than the way in which De Quincey himself recurs to this, as one of his chief titles to consideration, thus voluntarily and joyfully making it his pride to claim a secondary place, and shine by a reflected light. The first publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798), including, as he expressly mentions, Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, he calls "the greatest event in the unfolding of my own mind." (*Works*, vol. ii. p. 142, Hogg's edition.) And in the revised and enlarged *Confessions*, in 1856, we read: "Was I then, in July, 1802, really quoting from Wordsworth? Yes, reader; and I only in all Europe." (*Confessions*, Hogg's edition, p. 98.)

But there are ranks in the order of genius, as there are ranks in that of talent. De Quincey, by virtue of his combining great emotional sensibility with great intellectual subtilty, belongs to the order of genius; but he does not belong to the first rank in it. He has genius, but it is not creative; originality and independence, but they are employed in analysing, interpreting, and expounding. There is such a thing as an original and independent *expositor*. The insight which such an one brings is drawn from his own sympathetic intelligence, and is proportioned to its keenness and closeness; it is the insight of subtilty, not of acuteness. That is the shape De

Quincey's genius takes ; not creative, but illuminative ; widely different in method and results from that of merely talented expounders, however conscientious and well-informed, who are acute without being subtil. He precedes you with a torch. And presently, or perhaps even at the first sentence, the subject glows and the reader kindles ; as for instance in the *Joan of Arc* :

“What is to be thought of *her* ? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that—like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa—rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings ?”

De Quincey had a theory of his own about genius, which, if good things will bear repeating, well deserves to recur, as it does, more than once in his works :

“Genius is intellectual power impregnated with the *moral* nature, and expresses a synthesis of the active in man with his original organic capacity of pleasure and pain. Hence the very word *genius*, because the *genial* nature in its whole organisation is expressed and involved in it. Hence, also, arises the reason that genius is always peculiar and individual ; one man's genius never exactly

repeats another man's. But talent is the same in all men ; and that which is effected by talent, can never serve to identify or indicate its author. Hence, too, that, although talent is the object of respect, it never conciliates love ; you love a man of talent perhaps *in concreto*, but not talent, whereas genius, even for itself, is idolized."

Mrs. Browning's fine saying about Napoleon in *Crowned and Buried* irresistibly occurs to one. The man, she says, was flawed ;

— "but since he had  
*The genius to be loved*, why let him have  
The justice to be honoured in his grave."

De Quincey's analysis, in my opinion, exactly hits the mark, and I am not aware that it can be claimed by any one before him.

His own genius, as we have seen, takes the shape of insight employed in exposition. A clear, subtil, and penetrating intelligence is employed, not without humour, in exhibiting and unfolding the essential characters of whatever subject he takes in hand. He has enjoyed and comprehended the spectacle himself, and he is resolved that you also shall enjoy and comprehend it. His own consciousness of this is the cause of that didactic tone which is often noticeable, as well as of that digressiveness and introduction of anecdote, which some critics seem to have found somewhat wearisome. If you want, as so many do



want, a brief handbook of any subject, De Quincey's are not the pages to go to. If, again, you want pure amusement and entertainment, without effort of your own, without any previous interest in the subject-matter, this, too, is not to be expected of De Quincey. He is neither a schoolmaster nor a show-man. But if you want any of those subjects which he has treated shown to you as in a magician's glass, its core laid bare, its relations to kindred subjects, and its bearing on human interests unfolded, and that in a manner which kindles and sustains the interest, while it calls out your own energies of mind to make the subject your own,—if this is what you want, and if, at the same time, you will not grudge a little time and some slight effort of attention,—then take up a volume of De Quincey, say for example one of those containing the articles on Parr or Bentley, Pope or Goldsmith, or the Last Days of Kant, or in history the Cæsars, Cicero, Herodotus, Secret Societies, Homer and the Homeridæ, the Casuistry of Roman Meals, or—last not least—the genial and penetrative sketch of Shakespere, and I venture to promise that you will rise from the reading of it charmed, invigorated, and instructed. Often, indeed, you will stumble on some saying or *aperçu*, or on some piece of information,



which has since become common property, or been followed up by others. Chance will have led you to its original quarrying and purveyorship, to the first candle of which your own knowledge is possibly a distant reverberation.

Nor is it a meagre list of subjects to which De Quincey can introduce you. His sixteen volumes are filled with essays in every direction of history, biography, scholarship, criticism, literature. They are a perfect mine of instruction for any one who is willing, not to take his information and his opinions ready made from his author, but to have subjects opened up for him, questions concerning them broached, foundations for future reading laid. In this way it is that De Quincey, more truly than perhaps any author that can be named, is a *popular* writer; he writes to and for the people; and for the people it is that his writings are most valuable. To quote from a little essay of his, *On the Scriptural Expression for Eternity*, written so late as 1852, "As the *reading* public and the *thinking* public is every year outgrowing more and more notoriously the mere *learned* public, it becomes every year more and more the right of the former public to give the law preferably to the latter public, upon all points which concern its own separate interests;" which is

as fine a democratic sentiment as need be expected from a high professing Tory. He aims at interesting a wide and universal, not merely a select literary, audience, notwithstanding the solidity of the information he has to convey. And this very aim it is, or rather the style adopted in consequence of it, which sets the seal of permanence upon his writings, promising them more than that ephemeral existence which is the inevitable fate of most magazine articles, even when they are more fully abreast of the latest information.

And here, at the risk of possibly seeming tedious, I must interpose a remark which, as will shortly appear, is most important for a true appreciation of our author. It is that he belongs not to science but to literature. He is an original expositor and interpreter, but, except in one single case, he is a literary and not a scientific expositor. His subjects for the most part are recognised as literary subjects, and he does not attempt to transcend that mode of treatment. He has no scientific theory of History, or of Politics, to propound; no science of criticism; no system of metaphysic, or of ethic. Not that he was unacquainted, indeed very much the reverse, with the best of what had been written on these subjects; but he comes forward with no speculations of a sys-

tematic kind, of his own. *Every* subject is open to a literary, as well as to a scientific, treatment, and a literary treatment is that which it receives at De Quincey's hand. The sole exception is Political Economy, to which he devotes a separate work, the *Logic of Political Economy*, published in 1844, in which he appears as the expositor of Ricardo. The English edition of his works excludes this admirable book, though admitting the *Templars' Dialogues* on the same subject, probably on account of its more literary form. I shall recur to this book presently.\*

It is, then, as a literary writer that De Quincey must in the first instance be judged. And here we are again met by a distinction which is his property; again we have to judge him as it were out of his own mouth, simply because he it is who has laid down the fundamental distinctions of the matter. Do his works take rank under the *Literature of Power*, or merely under the *Literature of Knowledge*? Do they aim at moving the heart as well as teaching the understanding, or are they confined to the latter function alone? The distinction will be found in

\* Since the above was written, which was in 1877, just after the appearance of the *Life*, this omission has been happily rectified, and the *Logic of Political Economy* included in a supplementary volume, paged so as to be continuous with vol. xiii. of Messrs. Black's edition of the *Works*. The supplementary volume was published in 1878.

the essay on Pope (vol. ix. p. 5, Hogg's edition). The passage is far too long for transcription in its entirety; a word or two from it must suffice:

“Were it not that human sensibilities are ventilated and continually called out into exercise by the great phenomena of infancy, or of real life as it moves through chance and change, or of literature as it recombines these elements in the mimeries of poetry, romance, &c., it is certain that, like any animal power or muscular energy falling into disuse, all such sensibilities would gradually droop and dwindle. It is in relation to these great *moral* capacities of man that the literature of power, as contradistinguished from that of knowledge, lives and has its field of action. It is concerned with what is highest in man; for the Scriptures themselves never condescended to deal by suggestion or co-operation with the mere discursive understanding: when speaking of man in his intellectual capacity, the Scriptures speak not of the understanding, but of ‘*the understanding heart*,’—making the heart, *i.e.* the great *intuitive* (or non-discursive) organ, to be the interchangeable formula for man in his highest state of capacity for the infinite.”

There is a certain class of works, then, which by their aim alone proclaim themselves as belonging to the Literature of Power. They may be good, bad, or indifferent, in that class; they may hit or they may miss their aim; but the class to which they belong is marked out by their aim and scope alone. Their scope proclaims their class, be their success in attaining it what it may. The poem,

the drama, the romance, the novel, the sermon, for instance, all belong clearly and inevitably to the *power* literature; history, biography, travels, criticism, philosophy, belong *prima facie* at least to the *knowledge* literature. Their avowed and obvious aim is to *instruct* by communicating or interpreting facts. And it is under one or other of these latter heads that most of De Quincey's writings fall, except the *Political Economy* which is scientific.

But observe the limitation. I said their *avowed* and *obvious* aim would mark them as belonging to the knowledge literature. Is there, then, any other consideration which can entitle them to a place in the literature of power? There certainly is. The two classes are not *finally* distinguished by the avowed and obvious aim, or even by the title of the works which are to be ranged under them. Wherever the subject, being capable of an imaginative and emotional treatment, is so handled as to be made the vehicle of moving the sympathies as well as instructing the understanding, then the work rises, in virtue of this handling alone, into the power literature, and that without any formal claim being put forward in the preface. But then see what follows; so far from the scope, irrespective of the success, determining its class, the reverse becomes

the law, and the *success* of the work in rousing and enlisting our sympathies ensures our ranking it as a work of *power*, irrespective of the avowed and obvious scope indicated by its title.

Even subjects which already belong to science, much more those which belong to literature, may be so treated as to raise the work that treats them into a work of power. The great didactic poems of Virgil and Lucretius, and (in prose) Edgar Poe's *Eureka*, are instances. Criticism, especially art-criticism, is closely allied to the power literature. Mr. Ruskin's greater works for instance,—who can mistake their claim to this rank? And Mr. Carlyle's *French Revolution* is an instance of the same thing in the domain of history. There are such things, then, as works which belong to the Literature of Power, by virtue of the way in which the subjects are handled, the mode and manner of their treatment, the key in which they are composed, the style in which they are embodied. The manner and the style create in them a soul under the ribs of death.

To this class of writings the works of De Quincey belong. They are *militant* for a place in the Literature of Power. Not militant in the sense in which he himself applies that term to the knowledge literature, but in the sense that only success in moving

our sympathies, the recognition of which lies in opinion not in proof, makes good the rank and dignity of the work. If they rank with power literature, they do so not by reason of the subjects treated of, but by virtue of the method and manner of treatment, in one comprehensive word, by their *Style*.

Of what, then, do De Quincey's works consist? His own "rude general classification" of them, in the Preface to the first volume of the collected English edition revised by himself, and written therefore when the revision was only just begun, is as follows. He makes three classes, (1) papers which propose primarily to amuse the reader, but which may happen occasionally to reach a higher station, at which the amusement passes into an impassioned interest; —instance, the *Autobiographic Sketches*; (2) what he calls simply Essays, which address themselves purely to the understanding; *e.g.* the *Essenes*, the *Cæsars*, and *Cicero*; (3) "a far higher class of compositions, the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, and also (but more emphatically) the *Suspiria de Profundis*." This classification dates back to the beginning of the English revised edition, that is, to 1853, at which time also the American edition, referred to in the Preface, numbered not more than seven volumes, if even so many. At present, with the six-



teen volumes of the English edition before us, a somewhat more detailed classification may be of service.

The English edition, even though for the most part revised by the author, is, in some important respects, a chaos. It does not, as a rule, inform us either of the date at which the papers were written, or of the magazine or periodical in which they appeared. Its omissions are not unimportant, excluding, for instance, both the tale of *Klosterheim* and the *Logic of Political Economy*. The latter is a serious defect, bearing, as the edition now does, the ambitious title of *Works*. The original title adopted by De Quincey was *Selections, Grave and Gay, from Writings published and unpublished*; a title admirably expressing the nature and purpose of the contents. I suppose it was thought that *Works* would be more generally attractive, as promising more; while at the same time the public would not care to be bored with so unpromising a subject as political economy, let alone its *Logic*, or drouth upon drouth.\*

Be it as it may, let us take stock of the most

\* I let this passage stand as it was written in 1877; and why? Because the publication of the supplementary volume containing the *Logic of Political Economy* has now changed the blame it expresses into a deserved compliment.



important items of its contents. And suppose we classify as follows. First let us place those works which are more predominantly creative, and belong the most clearly to the literature of power; in the second group, those in which this is less markedly the case, owing to the claims of the matter predominating, in them, over those of the manner. I say less markedly, for in almost all there is some touch, and in many the touches are frequent and brilliant, of the creative spirit of genius and the spontaneous eloquence which embodies it.

I. (*Literature of Power.*) The Confessions and Suspiria. The English Mail Coach; with its adjuncts, The Glory of Motion, The Vision of Sudden Death, The Dream Fugue. The Autobiographic Sketches in vols. i. and ii. to the end of Early Memorials of Grasmere. The two papers on Murder. Joan of Arc.

These are the writings which, in my opinion, are the chief pillars of De Quincey's fame, his surest title to a lasting place, secure from chance and change, among the immortals of his epoch. An original genius, individual and therefore inimitable, has invested these works with a perennial charm, disparate but not inferior to that which breathes

from the choicest among the *Essays of Elia*, or the *Imaginary Conversations* of Landor.

II. (*Literature of Knowledge*.) This, which is the most numerous class, I would roughly subdivide as follows :

1. *Historical and Political*. The Cæsars. Cicero. The Essenes. Judas Iscariot. The Philosophy of Herodotus. Plato's Republic. The Revolution of Greece. Greece under the Romans. Modern Greece. Charlemagne. On War. Secret Societies. A Tory's Account of Toryism. Political Parties of Modern England. Falsification of English History. The Revolt of the Tartars. Ceylon. Memorial Chronology. &c. &c.

2. *Social and Ethical*. The Templars' Dialogues on Political Economy. The Casuistry of Roman Meals. French and English Manners. National Temperance Movements. Modern Superstition. Protestantism. Casuistry. The Pagan Oracles. The Theban Sphinx. Miracles as Subjects of Testimony. Christianity as an Organ of Political Movement. System of the Heavens as revealed by Lord Rosse's Telescope. Glance at the Works of Mackintosh. Presence of Mind. The Spanish Military Nun (which in form is a tale). &c. &c.

3. *General Literature.* Homer and the Homeridæ. Theory of Greek Tragedy. The Antigone of Sophocles. The Knocking at the Gate in *Macbeth*. Schlosser's Literary History of the 18th Century. Milton. Alexander Pope. On Wordsworth's Poetry. Language. Rhetoric. Style. Milton *versus* Southey and Landor. Letters to a Young Man, &c. Orthographic Mutineers. Conversation. Ælius Lamia. &c. &c.

4. *Personal Criticism and Biography.* Life of Shakespere. The Sketches of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey. The Last Days of Kant. Whiggism in its relations to Literature (Dr. Parr). Oliver Goldsmith. Richard Bentley. Shelley. Keats. Charles Lamb. Notes on Walter Savage Landor. Lord Carlisle on Pope. Life of Pope. Life of Milton. Sortilege and Astrology. Numerous minor biographical notices, criticisms, and translations, among them of Lessing's Laocoon, of Kant's Idea of an Universal History; &c. &c.

It would take me far beyond the limits of a single paper, as it would be also far beyond my own powers, to follow De Quincey through this varied list, endeavouring to appraise the value of the several essays, as contributions to the knowledge of the

subjects treated. Notwithstanding, it would be requisite in this place to make some remarks on the only important work not included in it, the *Logic of Political Economy*, did it not appear a better plan to give that subject a separate treatment. For this is the only work in which De Quincey appears as a distinctly scientific expositor, and therefore is of peculiar importance in estimating his mental powers. It has also been the subject of a disparaging remark by John Stuart Mill, who is justly considered a high authority on economical questions. It is necessary, therefore, on De Quincey's behalf, that this matter should be examined, if his claim to be considered a sound reasoner on a scientific subject is to be vindicated. This it will be my endeavour to do in the following essay.

To keep, then, to literary ground. The list of Essays is long and miscellaneous. The "once" that De Quincey exerted himself to write must have been a *once* that often happened. The reader will find traces, too, of knowledge, power, and skill in treating other subjects besides that of "the human mind." The basis of whatever power he showed as an essayist was laid in a large range of philosophic reading, and a habit of deep and genuine philosophic thought. It is in vain for any man to rely on *mere*

acquaintance with the subject which he treats, even when combined with great readiness and skill in writing, if the result is to be in any measure an acquisition to futurity. The subtil links that connect it with the general fears and hopes and efforts of mankind will be inevitably wanting. The relations which bind it to the other parts of human history, not being perceived by the writer, will not be suggested by tacit pervadure or explicit announcement to the reader. There will be a charm wanting which alone can preserve it in perennial freshness. Writings to live must be impregnated with philosophy.

De Quincey's reputation among his contemporaries both for depth and range of philosophic knowledge stood very high. It was just the kind of reputation we should expect from the character of the man; the reputation not of a professor of any of the different branches of philosophy, but of one who had studied at first hand from love of the subject, and with a view to satisfy the obstinate questionings of his own mind. His philosophic reading has left indeed but little *direct* trace in his essays; and some of what there is he has not cared to include among his republished works. But of his genuine delight in philosophical literature there can be no

doubt. It is a mere straw, but it shows the way of the wind, to mention that I have seen his copy of Giordano Bruno's *De Monade Numero et Figura. Item de Innumerabilibus Libri Octo*, 12mo, 1591; and on the fly-leaf at the end, there is written in De Quincey's clear hand, "Bought this day, Wednesday, May 31st, 1809;—brought home this evening between 8 and 9 o'clock." And I am told by one who knew him well that, in later years, this same little volume was his frequent companion, that he would pace up and down the room with it in his hand, repeating from it and referring to it. His copy of Spinoza's *Ethic* also, the *Opera Posthuma* of 1677, bears on its fly-leaf, in the same hand, "Paid Mr. Webber 25s. for this book,—this morning, Thursday, July 26th, 1810." Possibly the very same volume spoken of in an amusing note to the essay on Bentley. These things bear witness to something more than a mere book-hunter's enthusiasm.

In ethical matters too De Quincey was a master. Years ago I remember extracting from one of the earlier published volumes of the American edition (*Life and Manners*, vol. i. p. 309, 1851) a passage in which Paley is criticised. The passage is not reproduced in the English edition, but may be found in *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for August, 1835

(vol. ii., New Series, p. 549). I hold it to have been the best piece of instruction in Ethic I ever received; it led me right into the heart of the theory, and became a foundation for future thought to build on. The scope of the passage was to distinguish two great questions in Ethic, one concerning the *ratio cognoscendi*, the other the *ratio essendi*, of virtue, and then to point out how the two are by Paley confused with each other, and his answer to the latter (and that according to De Quincey a wrong answer, namely, *Utility*) offered as if it were an answer to the former, which is the real question which Ethic has to answer.

De Quincey thus takes strong anti-utilitarian ground in Ethic. He is disposed also by natural temperament to take anti-determinist views in the question of free-will; but in this case, such is his logical clearness that, in stating this question for decision, he shows himself necessarian (as it was then generally called) in *fact*, though contesting the propriety of the *name*. De Quincey was thus what we should now call a Free-will Determinist. I have found a note in his well-known hand on the cover of a copy of Crombie on *Philosophical Necessity*, 1793, which from its clearness and brevity is well worth transcribing.

“Any reason, which has reference to action, we call a motive. To act without a motive—*i.e.* without a reason—is (otherwise expressed) to act irrationally. Now all action in obedience to a motive the Necessarians call *necessity*: and to establish liberty, as against *them*, it would be required of us to establish a case of action without (or against) motives. The true liberty however—the true self-determination—lies in this, that we by our own internal acts *create* our own motives: those considerations, which to you or me are motives, to another are not so: and why? Because my reflexions upon the tendency of particular acts, or because my feelings connected with them, have given to certain considerations a weight which raises them into the strength and power of motives. Here lies our liberty. And to an obedience to motives thus created it is an easy artifice to give the name of necessity: but that creates no real necessity. The autonomy of Man is still secure.

“The answer to the Necessarians therefore—is to grant all they urge,—but to deny their consequence or rather the propriety of their denomination.”

Yes, the autonomy, the self-determination, of the conscious agent is the fact which once appeared imperilled by the doctrine of necessity; and De Quincey's words depict the state of mind of one who, being in the first place fully alive to the truth and value of the autonomy, is then awakened to the fact that it is not endangered by a truth which is its complement, this namely, that “nothing is that swerves from law;” liberty itself being obedience to law, but



to law imposed from within, not from without; or in other words, that liberty is one of the modes of necessity, and the human will, in all its freedom, one of the works of nature.

The foundations of De Quincey's success as critic and essayist were thus laid in wide philosophic reading, deep and accurate philosophic thinking. But these foundations were for the most part kept out of sight. He wrote but little on philosophy, and even that little he did not see fit to include in the revision of his works. Indeed, it seems as if, in later years, having achieved nothing in philosophy, he would obliterate whatever claims he may once have had to rank as a philosopher, and bury in oblivion the hopes which as a young man he had cherished in that direction. "My proper vocation, as I well knew, was the exercise of the analytic understanding. Now, for the most part, analytic studies are continuous, and not to be pursued by fits and starts, or fragmentary efforts,"—he writes in the first edition of the *Confessions* (1822), p. 148. But these words are omitted from the second edition of 1856.

Still it remains true, that his real vocation *was* what he says, and the power and faculty of mind remained the same, although one part of the career was missed, which might have been opened by it.

He *did* exercise the analytic understanding, but it was upon non-philosophical subjects. It is a rare combination of faculties that distinguishes him; the triple combination of analytic subtilty and grasp of thought with (1) memory for and interest in all kinds of details relating however remotely to life and manners, and (2) a profound power of appreciating and enjoying the most imaginative poetry. Any two of these are rare in combination; how much rarer the three.

One result of this suppression of what he had thought or written on philosophy, seeing that it was not and could not be *complete*, has been unfortunate. It has caused him to be judged by the fragmentary utterances which remain, and by these read in connection with the high admiration for his philosophic powers entertained by his contemporaries. I have a special instance of this in view, Mr. J. H. Stirling's demolition of a passage of De Quincey on Kant (*Fortnightly Review*, Oct. 1867). I say *demolition* because I think that in the main Mr. Stirling's criticism of that passage is correct. It is so because the point of view from which it is pronounced is more commanding and comprehensive. What De Quincey's point of view was I will presently show; but first I must say that it strikes me as somewhat

ungenerous, to use no stronger term, when one of a generation far better versed in German philosophical literature, than was De Quincey's, is extreme to tax the shortcomings of a writer who not only lacked the advantages which we enjoy, but who was himself among the foremost of those to whom our own generation mainly owes its enjoyment of them. The deadness of those times to those matters was far greater than the deadness of the present time, great as that is; and in England at least I do not know of any one who did more than De Quincey to kindle a genuine interest in them.

Passing over points of secondary importance, the main drift of the passage in question is briefly this, that De Quincey represents Kant's mind as essentially a destructive one, whereas Mr. Stirling says it was constructive essentially, and construction his great ruling purpose. And Mr. Stirling's view is, in my opinion at least, clearly right; De Quincey's clearly wrong. But I would urge that it is only fair to take De Quincey's point of view into account. The passage in question occurs in connection with the subject of Christianity and Coleridge's Unitarianism. It is in fact a waif and stray from a larger body; and if read in connection with the rest, the point of view occupied by De Quincey in regard to

Kant will become manifest; and his expressions from that point of view, if not justified, will at any rate be shown to demand an explanation very different from the charlatanism which (to sum it up in a word of my own) is Mr. Stirling's hypothesis.

It is one thing to read philosophy with a view to make a systematic study of the subject for its own sake; it is another to read it for the purpose of throwing light on questions and views with which the reader's mind is already pre-occupied; and it is yet another to read it for the sake of being able to display one's reading afterwards. Mr. Stirling supposes that, because De Quincey was not in the first case, therefore he was in the third. The second case, which is the real one, escaped him.

De Quincey approached Kant with the pre-occupation of theology; the philosophy, or rather what did duty for one, with which he started was that of a thoughtful disciple of the Church of England; the question with him was, what light was thrown by the originator of the Transcendental Theory upon *this* world of thought and belief. From that point of view it was that Kant appeared to him, as he did to many others, utterly destructive, leaving no basis which was at once positive and speculative, for a theological creed at all. Kant's theory sweeps wholly

away the old speculative foundations of theology, replaces them by proving that we can neither affirm nor yet deny any speculative doctrine in their place, and then relies, not on the speculative but on the practical reason, for supplying a positive foundation for religion. This could not but appear utterly unsatisfactory to one in De Quincey's position, who was not studying the philosophy for its own sake, but for the sake of its bearing on the questions suggested by his creed.

Whoever will take the trouble to look into a paper of De Quincey's contributed to *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine* for June 1836 (vol. iii., New Series, p. 350), will find there not only a very good, though brief, sketch of the main points in the *Critic of Pure Reason*, but also ample confirmation of what I have said about De Quincey's point of view. "Let a man," he says, "meditate but a little on this" [the transcendental theory of the idea of Cause] "or other aspects of this transcendental philosophy, and he will find the steadfast earth itself rocking as it were beneath his feet; a world about him, which is in some sense a world of deception; and a world before him, which seems to promise a world of confusion, or a '*world not realised.*'" (p. 357.) And again: "As often as I looked into his works, I ex-

claimed in my heart, with the widowed queen of Carthage, using her words in an altered application—‘*Quæsit lucem—ingemuitque repertâ.*’”

For from the same paper we find that, in spite of its apparent unprofitableness and negation, the Transcendental theory had in the main commanded his assent. “These are the two primary merits of the transcendental theory—1st, Its harmony with mathematics, and the fact of having first, by its doctrine of space, applied philosophy to the nature of geometrical evidence; 2ndly, That it has filled up, by means of its doctrine of the categories, the great *hiatus* in all schemes of the human understanding from Plato downwards. All the rest, with a reserve as to the part which concerns the *practical* reason (or will), is of more questionable value, and leads to manifold disputes. But I contend that, had transcendentalism done no other service than that of laying a foundation, sought but not found for ages, to the human understanding—namely, by showing an intelligible genesis to certain large and indispensable ideas—it would have claimed the gratitude of all profound inquirers.” (p. 359.)

De Quincey’s position, then, is that of a man forced to give an unwilling assent to the main conceptions of a system which he regards with dismay,

as destroying, or at least endangering, the best hopes and aspirations of humanity. Observe, however, his expressly excepting the doctrine of the practical reason from what is doubtful, and placing it with what is sound and valuable, in Kant's system. The exception is significant, especially when read in the light of some words on the same subject, written nearly four years later. I refer to one of the most interesting of all the personal sketches which ever came from De Quincey's pen, that on the highly gifted Charles Lloyd, a sketch which I suppose there were valid reasons for omitting from his republished writings. At the end of this touching memoir there is a passage of singular beauty on the voices of nature which speak to us of hopes of immortality beyond the grave; a passage which concludes as follows :

“But on that theme—Beware, reader! Listen to no *intellectual* argument. One argument there is, one only there is, of philosophic value: an argument drawn from the *moral* nature of man: an argument of Immanuel Kant's. The rest are dust and ashes.”

Now there is no law, I suppose, either human or divine, against any man's reading Kant, and even letting the world know what he for his part finds there, if any one is interested in hearing it. Nor is



it, I believe, necessary, first to produce a certificate from a college of authors, stating that you are enamoured of Metaphysic for her own sake, and intend to lecture on her sublime perfections. De Quincey made no such announcement; but there were hundreds who were glad to hear his report of Kant, having themselves much the same questions to put to that oracle as De Quincey had. It is beside the mark to contrast, as Mr. Stirling does, the sound and genuine work which Kant did in philosophy with the hollow and windy work which is all that De Quincey gets credit for. Kant was a man of science, De Quincey a man of letters. True, we might possibly have had a man of science in De Quincey; but then we should hardly have had the man of letters also. It is unjust to represent his powers as wasted and thrown away, merely because they were not turned into scientific channels.

More might be said in reply to Mr. Stirling's strictures on De Quincey; for instance, as to his criticism of Kant's style, and as to the "limited circle" within which "none durst tread but he," which clearly refers to the little group of conceptions which are the core of the Transcendental theory. But to go into detail on minor points would require a separate paper. Judgment once amended on the



main point, the rest must be left to rule themselves as best they may, in accordance therewith. One word, however, before parting with Mr. Stirling, on a purely *literary* matter. Possibly he may be pleased (in his next edition) to alter his remark, twice repeated, that *tumultuosissimo* is a word used by De Quincey. I remember, on one occasion, he uses the word *tumultuosissimamente*. But the former word I find neither in De Quincey nor yet in the dictionary.

After all, then, it is very questionable whether any part of De Quincey's vocation was really missed, whether in declining studies of a scientific character he was yielding to a stress of circumstances which another might have eluded, whether he was not really obeying the instincts of character with which nature had endowed him. His real turn of mind, subtil and acute as it was, inclined strongly to the concrete and the personal, to the pomps and glories of the world and the interests of living human beings. He loved imaginations more than thoughts, and thoughts for the sake of imaginations. Had he given himself to philosophy, it is easy to predict his affinities; his name would have been one of that numerous list, in which those of Plato and Giordano Bruno are the most illustrious.

This is clear from many passages ; for instance, one in which, speaking of the Lucretian *Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor*, he says, No, not *timor*, say rather *sensus infiniti* (*Modern Superstition*, vol. iii. p. 290). In this he puts his finger on the characterising *differentia* of religion. It is not fear, no, nor yet love, which by themselves are the source of religion ; these by themselves are terrestrial ; it is the *mystery* that accompanies them that makes them celestial, by giving them a celestial object, and giving man a sense of belonging, through them, to the infinite and unseen world. The remark here made by De Quincey has yet a great part to play, a part too often unsuspected, in the theory of the origin of religions and early stages of civilisation. But this, of course, by no means implies that every theory must be true, which professes to base itself upon that idea. — Or again, take the concluding sentence of the Dream Vision, in the *System of the Heavens*, embodying an image which he tells us is taken from Jean Paul Richter :

“Then the angel threw up his glorious hands to the heaven of heavens, saying, ‘End is there none to the universe of God? Lo! also THERE IS NO BEGINNING.’”

There is a winged as well as a wingless genius in philosophy ; and those that are endowed with it

belong irrevocably to literature, whether they pursue philosophy or not as their employment in chief.

Humour and pathos,—these *in literature* are the wings of genius, being two chief modes of imagination. Whatever ministers occasion for mirth becomes humorous when it is illumined by imagination, and whatever ministers to sorrow, under the same magic touch, becomes pathetic. As wit is the fun of talent, so is humour the fun of genius. Now both with humour and with pathos De Quincey abounds. They spring up spontaneously under his pen. And much of the beauty of his style consists, when the burden is pathetic, in its quietness and simplicity, in what it withholds rather than in what it expresses, so that, owing to this unexpressed background, we are made to feel the special case as part and parcel of the universal lot.

Many are the passages of exquisite and tender beauty scattered up and down his writings, free from ambitious ornament and turgid phrase, passages in which we are swiftly but gently lifted into a serener region, or in which sometimes “the tender grace of a day that is dead” is brought home to the heart, as by the placid spectacle of a clear autumn sunset. Take, for instance, the following :

“At present, and for many a year, I am myself the sole relic from that household sanctuary—sweet, solemn, profound—that concealed, as in some ark floating on solitary seas, eight persons, since called away, all except myself, one after one, to that rest which only could be deeper than ours was then.” (*Confessions*, p. 30, Hogg’s edition.)

Or this from the essay on Goldsmith :

“Their names ascend in songs of thankful commemoration, but seldom until the ears are deaf that would have thrilled to the music.”

Or this in another key, a crime being in question, the massacre of prisoners at Jaffa in 1799 :

“The fugitives did so; they came back—some trusting, some doubting. But strictly impartial was their welcome on shore. To the trusting there was no special favour; to the doubting no separate severity. All were massacred alike; and in one brief half-hour a loose scattering of soil rose as a winding-sheet over the forty-two hundred corpses, that heaved convulsively here and there for a moment, and then all was still.” (*Casuistry*, vol. viii. p. 265.)

Or if we would have a passage where the writer plainly intends putting forth his strength, let us take this, from the conclusion of the *Joan of Arc* :

“Bishop of Beauvais ! thy victim died in fire upon a scaffold—thou upon a down bed. But for the departing minutes of life, both are oftentimes alike. At the farewell crisis, when the gates of death are opening, and flesh is resting from its struggles, oftentimes the tortured and

the torturer have the same truce from carnal torment ; both sink together into sleep ; together both, sometimes, kindle into dreams. When the mortal mists were gathering fast upon you two, bishop and shepherd girl,—when the pavilions of life were closing up their shadowy curtains about you—let us try, through the gigantic glooms, to decipher the flying features of your separate visions.”

Humour is confessedly a much-vexed question. Those that have it not are tempted to deny the distinction between wit and humour, just as those who lack imagination persist in identifying it with fancy, and too many of those who lack genius are incapable of distinguishing it from talent. The essence of humour I take to be the same everywhere, but the ground on which it springs is different ; there is the humour of inventive, and there is the humour of analytic, minds. There is the humour of Shakespere or of Swift, which not only clothes the characters which they create, but is one of the precedent motives and ingredients in their creation. And there is the humour which is shown in the presentation of given and pre-existing characters and situations, bringing out whatever humorous quality is already latent in them ; a kind of humour, be it noted, which is included in the former as the less in the greater, so that he who has the first has both, but not *vice versa*. One thing, however, is clear ; there is no humour

without subtilty, as there is no wit without acuteness. It is natural that the non-creative humour should move by antithesis, by inversion of relations, and generally by imagining some critical circumstance the reverse of what it actually is. It depends upon subtilty as its condition.

This is the usual way in which De Quincey's humour moves; he imagines the contrary, the contrast, of what he is describing, thinks what it might appear to spectators with different interests, or from an opposite point of view; as, for instance, when he talks of "the general fate of travellers that intrude upon the solitude of robbers," or when he professes to palliate his obscurity of style by assuring you that, though rather obscure, he will be "not at all more so than Marinus in his Life of Proclus." This at least is the logical or intellectual machinery which becomes the vehicle of that shade of playfulness and fun which is the chief characteristic of De Quincey's humour, as it is also of Charles Lamb's.

The *Murder* papers are instances of this kind of humour sustained from beginning to end, and their central idea of treating murder *as a fine art* is an instance of it. The charm of these papers consists far more in the number and variety of the faces under which this central idea is constantly peeping

out, and the unflagging vivacity with which the stream of fun flows on, than in the separate quotability of absurd incident or witty antithesis. Or again, take the description of the state-coach in China, where "it was resolved by acclamation that the box was the imperial throne, and for the scoundrel who drove, he might sit where he could find a perch;" and who was accordingly kicked into the inside, where "he had all the inside places to himself." Or again, the fishing up the duns from the bath, in the paper entitled *Sortilege and Astrology*. Or again, to mention but one more case, the whole description of the nursery party in the *Autobiographic Sketches*, particularly the schemes of his eldest brother for walking on the ceiling, like the flies, only much better. "'Pooh!' he said, 'they are impostors; they pretend to do it, but they can't do it as it ought to be done. Ah! you should see me standing upright on the ceiling, with my head downwards, for half an hour together, and meditating profoundly.'" That *meditating profoundly* is exquisite, and quite dramatises the character.

But it is not only in those passages in which, from time to time, he rises aloft upon the wings of humour or pathos, nor even in those where he is consciously putting forth his whole command over



the powers of prose, that the main beauty of De Quincey's work consists. Its charm lies chiefly in the sometimes stately, but always natural and equable movement of his style at its ordinary level ; a style that diffuses an atmosphere of smiles and gaiety around it, a sunny style,

“Buoyant as morning, and as morning clear,”

but a style highly distasteful to the gloomy and morose, and to such as think that prose is the inalienable appanage of pedagogues. If language, to use Wordsworth's fine expression developed by De Quincey, is not the mere dress but rather the incarnation of thought, then, style of some kind being inseparable from language, a good style is the perfection, grace, beauty, health, of that incarnation. It is besides of the greatest importance as an aid to exposition, even in treating ordinary matters. As De Quincey puts it : “ Style has two separate functions—first, to brighten the *intelligibility* of a subject which is obscure to the understanding ; secondly, to regenerate the normal *power* and impressiveness of a subject which has become dormant to the sensibilities.” (vol. ix. p. 94.)

But how much more is this the case, when the subject in hand is such as to require and repay the



brightest light that can be brought to bear upon it ; when it is evanescent and subtly interwoven moods of mind, hardly to be called thoughts or even imaginations, that have to be arrested and interpreted for others ; moods it may be which even the subject of them finds it difficult to arrest and interpret to himself. He who cultivates style for this purpose and in this way, even though his success be small, deserves the praise of perfecting the power and enlarging the grasp of thought, by increasing the subtilty and keenness of language which is its embodiment. The reader's mental powers are increased by the effort to apprehend, as the writer's are by the effort to communicate, the finer shades of emotion and of thought which fleet over the dim mirror of consciousness. What one man thus describes as passing in himself another may have experienced without attempting to describe ; but if in reading he recognises it, he gains not only himself, he gains also a brother in the describer.

It is true that the profoundest and most sublime thoughts are ordinarily beyond the reach of any style of prose writing to convey, though not perhaps to indicate. Over and above the finest and most accurate description, something else is requisite to convey its meaning to the reader, namely, an effort on

his part to apprehend it ; and to spur the apprehension to this effort is generally far more beyond the power of prose than of verse. Prose, however balanced and musical in rhythm and cadence, or however vivid by abruptness or antithesis, it may be made, cannot so isolate its subjects from common images as to raise them into the higher and purer parts of the emotional atmosphere ; it carries them along the ground, with the narrative or argumentative matter which is the necessary burden of prose writing. But the use of metre is of itself an announcement that the burden of prose is not to be expected, that the reader must supply the filling in of circumstance for himself, must place himself by an effort of his own in an attitude to which the feelings that are expressed become intelligible.

Again, while metre thus calls on the reader to make an effort of his own, it also at the same time aids and stimulates it. A raising of the mental key, a solemnity of tone, is given by the mere use of metre, which it would be vainly sought to inspire by the most perfect prose. Not to mention the minor advantage that the metre directs the emphasis more pointedly, by irresistibly indicating those words on which the burden of thought is laid. For instance, in Shelley's *Adonais* :

“ Oh, dream not that the amorous Deep  
Will yet restore him to the vital air ;  
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.”

In prose the imaginative word *Deep* would need introduction if not apology ; and neither *dream* nor *feeds* would have an emphasis inevitably directed upon them, as it now is by the metre.

Although, then, prose can never be the equivalent of verse as a vehicle for poetic imagination, yet there are functions which it can perform, but has never yet performed fully, beauties and graces which are legitimately its own, but which it has never yet fully developed. Just as architecture, notwithstanding that it is subordinate to *use*, is bound to aim at all the beauty, elegance, and ornament, of which it is capable, in subordination to that use, so the art of prose writing has special capacities of beauty which by the law of perfection it is bound to aim at, while satisfying at the same time the logical uses which are its necessary conditions. Apply these principles to De Quincey's interpretative descriptions of subtil and evanescent moods of mind, and I think it will appear no idle boast that he makes, when, in the Preface to his first volume, he speaks of the *Confessions* and *Suspiria* as “ modes of impassioned prose ranging under no precedents that he is aware

of in any literature ;'' by which of course he does not mean that they are superior to, but merely different from, preceding writings.

To deal fully with De Quincey's style would require a volume, and to do it well would tax the powers of the most accomplished critic. But it would abundantly repay the labour, should any one undertake it, to analyse the motives and methods of De Quincey's style and exhibit its characteristics, by comparing them with those of other recognised masters of prose writing, such for instance as Landor, Arnold of Rugby, Lord Macaulay, Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Ruskin, and (last not least) Cardinal Newman.

But the critical science by the canons of which such an attempt must be guided, the science of style, exists as yet but very imperfectly. Style is, in fact, one entire but inseparable half of the whole sphere of written and spoken literature ; it is the *manner* of it, as distinguished from the *matter*. Most interesting it is to observe, in the great founder of literary criticism, Aristotle, in his *Rhetoric*, how at a certain place in that treatise, Book III. cap. 12, a distinction proper to the larger subject of style cuts in athwart, and even threatens to confuse the distinctions proper to the smaller subject of rhetoric. All public speaking, the subject of

rhetoric, Aristotle divides into the three heads of consultative, forensic, and exhibitory speaking (συμβουλευτικὸν, δίκανικὸν, ἐπιδεικτικὸν γένος). But public speaking and the speeches composed for it are but one part of literature as a whole, are but one part of that whole, of which style, the manner *how*, is one inseparable half, and with which therefore it is co-extensive. And accordingly in the third Book which is devoted to style, and at the chapter named, a cardinal distinction applicable to style is introduced, under which the styles proper to the three kinds of public speaking have, somehow or other, to be reduced. This distinction is into style proper to *writing* which is to be read or recited, and style proper to *speaking* against competitors which is to be heard in a public assembly (γραφικὴ and ἀγωνιστικὴ λέξις). And Aristotle settles the matter by bringing the style of his *exhibitory* speaking under the head of style proper to *writings*, and leaving the consultative and forensic styles under that of style proper to speaking against competitors in public.

Aristotle thus adumbrates the treatment of style as one inseparable half of the whole field of literature, the manner being inseparable from the matter of every phrase, every transition, every turn of

thought, however minute ; inseparable, as the members of all distinctions of strictly philosophical analysis are. But the theory of Style so understood has, so far at least as I am aware, remained where Aristotle left it, down not indeed to our own days, but to the days of De Quincey. He added a further distinction, which seems to me as important in the theory of the subject as his own example in the practice of it. Language we have seen him hold with Wordsworth to be the incarnation of thought ; that is, it is the expression externally of the motions of the mind in dealing with its objects, whatever they may be ; it is the mind visibly and audibly at work ; its *manner* or mode of dealing with the things that occupy it. Starting from this basis, the distinction which he draws is this. Style, he says, may be treated either as an *organic* or as a *mechanic* thing ; organic so far as it expresses the living motions of the mind, mechanic so far as those motions are subject to rules of art which may be acquired, transmitted, and learnt. There are accordingly two branches of the subject, the *organology* and the *mechanology* of style. (See the paper on *Style*, vol. xi. p. 194, Hogg's edit.)

This distinction sets the whole subject of style in a new and I think a true light ; it is at once philo-

sophical and profound; philosophical because its members are inseparables as well as opposites, and profound because it refers the nature and power of style to their deepest source, namely the character and power of the mind. Most of the distinctions given in treatises of Rhetoric are distinctions of the mechanology, laying down negative rules, precepts, what to avoid, illustrated by examples of faults. The *positive* part of the art of style is included chiefly in the organology, and this, so far as it can be learnt at all, must be learnt by studying the great masters, and by imbibing if possible their spirit.

When, for instance, Shakespere speaks of “taking arms against a sea of troubles,” this is an offence against the mechanology. But when he makes Prospero say to Miranda (*Tempest*, act i. sc. 2):

“The fringed curtains of thine eye advance,  
And say what thou seest yond,”

this is a beauty of the organology, and of the highest kind. The fanciful expression is the natural outcome of the peculiar mood of Prospero. He had laid a plan the development of which he is watching with heightened and pleasurable expectation, and the first critical moment is at hand,—Ferdinand is



coming into sight. The image of his daughter, too, in her morn of youth and loveliness, is present to him, and for her sake his plan has been laid. The exalted expression is not only *natural* to this state of mind, but also, being so, contributes to make the spectators aware that this *is* Prospero's state. It is a trait in the dramatic delineation of Prospero. That is Shakespere's *style*; that is his living *mind*.

But to return from De Quincey's theory to his practice, or rather to De Quincey himself. It is a characteristic, and indeed almost singular circumstance, that the greater portion of the autobiographic writings, and considerably the larger half even of the *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, are occupied with the feelings and events of childhood and boyhood. How few are the writers who have thought it worth their while to go back upon their early days and minutely depict the scenes of their childhood and early youth step by step, as they unrolled themselves, with all their accompaniment of hope and fear, doubting and debate, and the changing yet all-important colouring of momentary feeling. Introspection is common, but not the record of an introspection into the moods of boyhood, recalled in later life, as if for the purpose of exhibiting an actual example of the child being father of the man.



Yet if we would have a true, an intimately true, picture of character in manhood, it is to the springs of character in childhood that we must trace it back, for there lies the succession of turning points which have given it its lasting ply. There, too, in the acts and events of childhood, the springs of character lie bare; there they are not enveloped in a network of *reasons*, which being the products of experience, are known only to the man, but they appear what they are; they appear as feelings and motives derived from feelings. Whoever gives us the introspection of his childhood admits us to a far more intimate acquaintance than he who begins only with his manhood.

In one sense De Quincey's manhood came early, even prematurely. He was a self-conscious, self-dependent, actor in the scene of life, and that from motives which are not common at any age, being of an intellectual and imaginative order, when in the judgment of those about him he was an ordinary child, an ordinary schoolboy. On the other hand, while in one sense he too prematurely became a man, in another sense he never, at any age, ceased to be a child. His loyalty, his response to kindness, his disinterestedness, his intellectual equity, never left him; and it was because he would not count on

others being different, that he continued a child to the end. Such characters may be led into errors and actions which are deeply blamable, but they are also and in themselves deeply lovable, and their record will be read with gratitude by thousands, for, in a sense truer perhaps and deeper than that in which it can be said of poets, they hold the mirror up to nature.

It is into a non-worldly atmosphere that De Quincey rises when he is depicting himself; it is into that same atmosphere that he raises others about whom he writes, I mean when he describes them from personal observation. In the future, those whom he thus describes will be immeasurably the gainers; but in the immediate present, as denizens of the world, actors in every-day life, where, by some one or other, handles of disparagement are daily sought against every man, such a description is felt as an unwarranted violation of privacy. A man may violate his own privacy if he chooses; that of others he has no right to violate. This De Quincey did not always see. He spoke of others as he spoke of himself, freely and openly, occasionally too with a certain recklessness of satirical expression which jars upon the ear, as if the public at large, to whom he spoke, were to a man not only an intelligent

but an equitable audience, and would discount what was due to his extravagances. But not one reader in a thousand, of any present audience, can be reckoned on as truly intelligent and equitable. It is only in the future that the voice of the *units* prevails. To *these* it is that De Quincey is really speaking, as much when he writes of others as when he writes of himself; and in *their* judgment it is that those whom he describes will gain from having been described by De Quincey.

Do I then reckon on a long-lived popularity for De Quincey's writings? I certainly do. And why? To say it in one word, because of the total absence from them of the *sophistry* of their period. The sophistry of any period is whatever is written up to the mark of the views and modes of thinking then and there current. These are pre-supposed before the sophistry can succeed. The prevailing tone is caught, and then success is assured. But De Quincey's writings came straight from himself; were not moulded on the tone of the day. How should they have been; he who being most originally as well as richly endowed, had besides enjoyed in large measure one mode of education not often bestowed, especially in these crowded times,—the education of solitude, than which there is no microscope in this

world more powerful, if the eye can but endure to use it, nor any instrument more effectual for enforcing on the memory and on the will whatever is steadily contemplated through it. Whatever was original, whatever was peculiar, in De Quincey's organisation, we may be sure was greatly developed and intensified by his escape from school, his four months of lonely wandering over the Welsh hills, and that wandering, perhaps more lonely still, along the "never-ending terraces of Oxford Street." Whatever he wrote was sure to bear the impress of himself, not the impress of the current mode. Right or wrong, feeble or powerful, it was sure to be genuine, an outcome of the writer, not a reflex of the public.

Yet De Quincey was no seeker of solitude in order to escape from society, as a cynic or a misanthrope. Perhaps there never was a nature that more imperatively needed society. His interests were all of the *quicquid agunt homines* type, from "grandeurs that measured themselves against centuries," or the majesty of the "*Consul Romanus*," down to the most trivial anecdote, the nursery rhyme, or the nursery superstition. He was a born Conservative, if I may use the expression, a Conservative by natural constitution, just such a conservative as Pindar the Greek Lyrist was, having eyes to see and admire

whatever of great or good was already achieved, birth, wealth, courage, culture, nobility in all its shapes; but without that sense, which is the keynote of Liberalism, of a burden and a task imposed on all men of striving for a common far-off goal, of aiding in an arduous development, of realising a hardly to be gained ideal, in the elevation of mankind as a whole. History was to him a series of scenes, not a continuous progress in which the present generation has a practical part to play.

His own mind, too, is stationary; there is no growth, no enlargement, of his intellectual basis, as he advances in life. He speaks in his later essays from the same platform of ideas as in his earlier ones; it is only the occasion, the application, that is different. He has acquired much, but he has learnt little. His style on the other hand, when he applies himself in good earnest, becomes more perfect, and possibly, too, his artistic power of exposition. At least both are at their best in the enlarged edition of the *Confessions*, published three years before his death. Comparing this, either in single passages or as a whole, with the brief and rapidly written first edition, its superiority is unmistakable. He lived to make a perfect work of art out of that sketch, with which his literary career may be said to

have begun, and in which the basis of his reputation was laid.

These are points which it is essential to remark, in endeavouring to form a just estimate of De Quincey as a man of letters. Here is the weak side of his mind, here the darkness and narrowness, so at least it seems to me, of the otherwise large and luminous grasp of his intellect. Fragmentary indeed it was not; but it seems as if one whole aspect of human affairs, all that is summed up in the idea of Progress subject to laws which *science* can discover, was to him a blank. The nexus of individuals with one another, of class with class, and the secret but profound relations which connect man with an unseen world,—these were familiar ideas to him; but the nexus between earlier and later generations, between earlier and later races, in order of time, was an idea which he had not grasped, or at least the full significance of which he had not realised.

Nor would I be thought blind to the defects which sometimes disfigure his style, the instances here and there of misplaced colloquialism, jokes not worth making, repetitions of himself, repetitions of favourite quotations, which are obvious on the surface. In fact, the necessity of writing on the spur of the moment, and for different audiences, tempted him to

ride with too loose a rein, and to repeat too often what, being no more than the groove of his thought, the household furniture of his mind, should strictly have been said but once, if even that. All this comes out but too conspicuously, when scattered essays are assembled in republication.

But why do I bring forward all these deficiencies? To mention them is necessary, in order to a just estimation of his powers; but it would be superfluous to dwell on them, so long as justice is not done to his peculiar merits. Men, and therefore their works when taken as a whole, which is equivalent, are to be judged primarily, not like chains of argument by their weakest parts, but like poems or pictures by their strongest. Appreciate these first; *then* count and weigh the defects. The defects can only be understood by first knowing the aim of the writer and the methods which he takes to realise it. The rule is different for separate works, when these belong to the literature of knowledge; for there, the aim and method being known, a standard for the defects is at hand. But in judging men, in judging their works as a whole, and in judging works of the power literature even separately, to judge by the weakest parts is not only an injustice, it is a fatal blunder in criticism.



Apart from some brilliant exceptions, such for instance as the admirable critique in the *New Quarterly Magazine* for July 1875, the want of appreciation shown towards De Quincey by his literary countrymen is remarkable. It seems as if we sometimes do our thinking by deputy, wilfully put our eyes in our pockets and try spectacles instead. A man of great originality necessarily stands much more alone than men of more ordinary powers; he has to dispense with one whole stratum, so to speak, from which the water-supply of genial appreciation should be derived. Critics in the mass naturally, and quite excusably, praise ability and success in doing that which they themselves are attempting to do. Not only do they understand it better, not only do they find it easier to explain to the public, but they have this direct, though unconsciously operating, interest in doing so, that they are enforcing principles of criticism which, in case of their own success, will redound to their benefit. They praise what they admire, what they would like to imitate. The original writer, differing much from his critics, is apt to get scant justice from them, unless his merits lie very much on the surface, and his faults be tolerably withdrawn from observation. Where the reverse is the case, merits, however great, will pass unnoticed,



for it is no one's business to unearth them. That De Quincey's writings should, in spite of this, have won and hitherto kept a high place in popular estimation is a circumstance which augurs well for their obtaining in the end a more solid and lasting renown.



DE QUINCEY AS POLITICAL ECONOMIST :

OR

DE QUINCEY AND MILL ON  
SUPPLY AND DEMAND.



## DE QUINCEY AS POLITICAL ECONOMIST.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY is popularly known as a brilliant essayist, and as the author of *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*. To few is he known as a subtil and accomplished logician, and to still fewer as one of the fathers of Political Economy. True, the *Templar's Dialogues* were included in the first collected edition of his works; but these, though nothing can be more accurate in reasoning or more racy in style, yet deal with a portion only of the subject, and moreover their form is purely literary, not scientific. The *Logic of Political Economy*, published in 1844, is the substantive work, on which, supplemented however by the *Dialogues*, De Quincey's reputation as an economist depends. This has only lately been republished, in a Supplement to *Works*, vol. xiii., 1878. The references in the present article are to this volume.

In judging the powers of a literary man, who has left but one scientific work, that work naturally becomes of peculiar importance; and with this view

I was led to re-examine De Quincey's *Logic*, with particular reference to a certain disparaging remark concerning it thrown out by J. S. Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*, when discussing the doctrine of Supply and Demand. Considerable light may, I believe, be thrown on that question, and incidentally on a case of it which at present\* is much debated, I mean the Wages-fund theory, by an examination of the differences between these two distinguished writers.

J. S. Mill, in the third Book of his *Principles*, after quoting largely from De Quincey's exposition of some phenomena of value, to which he accords high praise, proceeds in his Chapter on Demand and Supply to state some difficulties relating to that subject, and then gives his own solution, a solution which, he says, must have been frequently given, though he can call to mind no one who has done so before himself, except J. B. Say. He then adds, "I should have imagined, however, that it must be familiar to all political economists, if the writings of several did not give evidence of some want of clearness on the point, and if the instance of Mr. De Quincey did not prove that the complete non-recog-

\* At present, *i.e.* in 1879, when this article was thrown into its present form, separate from the preceding Essay.

dition and implied denial of it are compatible with great intellectual ingenuity, and close intimacy with the subject-matter." (*Principles, &c.*, Book III. ch. ii. §3.) Strange spectacle, a Mill rebuking a De Quincey for deficiency in logical acumen!

Mill has\* long reigned over us; and not in political economy only, but in many departments of thought, there is no one to whom a higher debt of gratitude is due. But his reign more resembles a despotism based on *plébiscites* than a constitutional sovereignty. I for one dislike being governed by *dicta*; and this *dictum* of his, if it were well founded, would show a very grave defect in De Quincey's work; for which purpose it has been unhesitatingly accepted (after the nature of *dicta*) by Mr. Leslie Stephen, in his energetic attack on De Quincey's literary merits (*Fortnightly Review*, March 1871). Now on those merits Mr. Leslie Stephen has a right to his opinions, like every one else; nay more,—he has a right to them *and welcome*. But political economy is the only scientific subject of which De Quincey has come forward as an expositor. The point on which Mill taxes him with blindness is a cardinal one. Mill's authority is very generally appealed to. And the

\* Three years ago when this was written, the perfect tense was still appropriate. Writing now, I should omit the *has*.

consequence would be, supposing Mill to be correct, that De Quincey's work, already little known to the public, would cease to be regarded even by students as the sound and thorough exposition which it is, and would rank merely as one of high illustrative ability and "great intellectual ingenuity;" *ingenuity* being perhaps the word of most damning praise in the whole vocabulary of adverse criticism.

What then is the truth of this dictum of Mill's which Mr. Leslie Stephen so confidently echoes? Just *nil*. It is a complete misconception on Mill's part. And this I proceed to show. Mill, it must be remarked, is speaking of those exchanges where the commodities are not capable of indefinite reproduction at pleasure. As to the case where the commodities are so reproducible, there is no difference between him and De Quincey; both are good Ricardians on this point, and hold that market value, or price, is a value or a price which oscillates about the point of natural or cost value of the commodities. And in these cases Mill holds that their value does not depend, in the long run, upon demand and supply; "on the contrary demand and supply depend upon it." (*Ibid.* ch. iii. § 2.) This is just the same doctrine as De Quincey's, and about this there is no dispute.



But with regard to the class of commodities the reproduction of which is limited, Mill holds very different language, and here it is that he thinks De Quincey blind. "Demand and supply," he says, "govern the value of all things which cannot be indefinitely increased; except that, even for them, when produced by industry, there is a minimum value determined by the cost of production." (*Ibid.*) Mill adopts the notion that, in this class of cases, demand and supply are the real regulator, and not merely a concomitant of changes in value.

But here arise the difficulties of which, as we have seen, Mill comes forward with his solution. These difficulties are two; first a gratuitous one arising from the habit of speaking of a *ratio* between the demand and the supply, the true notion being that of an *equation* between them; secondly the apparent paradox of demand partly depending on value, and yet value reciprocally depending on demand. (*Ibid.* ch. ii. § 3.) These difficulties, it may be observed, so far as they are difficulties at all, attach equally to both cases of exchange, though Mill sees them only in the case where the commodities are of limited reproducibility, the reason of which will appear as we proceed. It is to the solution of these difficulties that he says De Quincey is blind.

But the question is, are they difficulties for De Quincey? Are they not rather difficulties which Mill has created for himself unnecessarily, and the solution of which is therefore incumbent solely on himself? I shall make it evident that this is the real state of the case, and farther, that Mill's "solution" consists in nothing else than knocking down the phantom, supply and demand, which he first sets up as the real regulator of values, and in this way returns to the same doctrine which De Quincey holds from the first, without that devious process; and then, proud of his escape, charges De Quincey with being still involved in errors into which he never once fell. He wrongly imagines that De Quincey must hold the doctrine of supply and demand really governing prices, and therefore must want a solution of the difficulties which that supposition entails.

But in the first place De Quincey never speaks of a *ratio* between supply and demand at all, still less of values depending on such a *ratio*. On the contrary, in speaking of scarcity and monopoly, he expressly shows that scarcity is a merely negative condition, allowing the *positive* cause of an increase in value, namely, the *desire* of the purchaser, to come into fuller play; and thus that the degree to which the value rises does not depend on the degree of the

scarcity. (*Logic of Political Economy*, Suppl. Vol. p. 281, 284 note.) In his chapter *On Market Value* again, there is a still stronger passage, but it might be objected that here he is speaking only of commodities reproducible at pleasure. It is clear to me that his meaning is not so restricted; but be it as it may, the passage is so highly characteristic that I will quote it:

“A crazy maxim has got possession of the whole world; viz. that price is, or can be, determined by the relation between supply and demand. The man who uses this maxim does not himself mean it. He cannot say, ‘I think thus; you think otherwise.’ He does *not* think thus. Try to extract price for wheat from the simple relation of the supply to the demand. Suppose the supply to be by one tenth part beyond the demand, what price will *that* indicate for eight imperial bushels of the best red wheat, weighing sixty-four pounds a bushel? Will the price be a shilling, or will it be a thousand pounds?” (*Ibid.* p. 343.)

So much as to his freedom from Mill’s first difficulty. As to the second, the apparent paradox of demand and value reciprocally depending on each other, De Quincey shows that the true agencies, in these cases, are the *affirmative* and the *negative* values, as he calls them; the affirmative value being that set upon the commodity by the desire of the purchaser, and the negative value being that set

upon it by its cost, or difficulty of production, operating through the reluctance of the seller to part with it below a certain price;—or, as he also puts it, “what the buyer can afford to give,” and “what the seller can afford to take.” (*Ibid.* p. 297. And see the whole of the section entitled *On the Two Modes of Exchange Value,—Affirmative and Negative.*)

Applying this general doctrine to the case where there are several purchasers and several sellers of the same commodity, and where merchants are distinguished from producers, in order to bring it into contact with Mill’s difficulty, we may state it is as follows. According as the commodities become limited in quantity, either by nature or by the sellers withdrawing them, the *affirmative* value becomes operative in fixing the upper limit of price, the highest price which purchasers can afford to give; throughout which operation, sellers are trading on the desire of purchasers for the commodities.

And again, according as the commodities become plentiful, either by nature or by sellers bringing them into the market, the *negative* value becomes operative in fixing the lower limit of price, the lowest which sellers can afford to take; and here it is the purchasers who are trading on the desire of the

sellers for the purchase money. Thus value in one sense depends upon demand, namely, when demand means effectual desire of purchasers for commodities, and of sellers for purchase money; and demand depends upon value in the sense that a lower price asked tends to bring in, and a higher price to exclude, purchasers for any commodity.

Such is De Quincey's doctrine. Now what is Mill's? Supply and demand, he holds, govern the changes in value. Well, but how does that account of the matter differ from De Quincey's? In this way. With De Quincey, supply and demand are the instrument, the means, the mode, by which effect is given to the desires of men; with Mill they are the operative agents, of which the desires of men are the instruments. They are forces, subject to a mysterious law of tending to an equality with each other; a tendency which is effectuated by competition. Having remarked that the idea of a *ratio* is misplaced, the proper mathematical analogy being an *equation*, Mill thus proceeds: "Demand and supply, the quantity demanded and the quantity supplied, will be made equal. If unequal at any moment, competition equalises them, and the manner in which this is done is by an adjustment of the value. If the demand increases, the value rises; if

the demand diminishes, the value falls: again, if the supply falls off, the value rises; and falls if the supply is increased. (*Principles, &c.*, Book III. ch. ii. § 4.) It is a self-working machinery, in which “the quantity demanded” and “the quantity supplied” vary *of themselves*, subject only to the law of equating themselves.

The quantity demanded and the quantity supplied are thus supposed to balance themselves as if they were physical agents, like water finding its own level. But here Mill overlooks one obscure but decisive fact. The quantity demanded and the quantity supplied, at the moment of equation, are not only equal, they are *identical*. For instance, late on a Saturday evening I go to the butcher's to get a leg of mutton; he has just one remaining, which he sells me and then closes his shop. The quantity demanded and the quantity supplied are indeed exactly equal; for each consists in the same leg of mutton. The article is identical as well as the quantity equal. But the identity of things with themselves cannot alone be the basis of a law of exchange value.

Several things are included in the phrases “quantity demanded” and “quantity supplied.” First the articles, then their quantities, then the demand for

them, then the supply of them. Of these four things, the *demand* and the *supply*, that is, the action of the buyer and the action of the seller, are the important items. It is only *as contemplated* by the buyer and *as contemplated* by the seller, that the quantities offered and taken can be regarded as equal without being also identical. Farther, when we look at the actions of the buyer and seller as the important circumstances of the case, another striking feature discloses itself, which is this. The supply on the part of the seller is as much a *demand* as the demand of the purchaser, and this again is as much a *supply* as the supply of the seller. The supply of the seller is an effectual demand for the purchase money, and the purchase money of the buyer is a supply for that demand of the seller. In *all* exchanges, by the mere fact that they are effected, these mutual demands satisfy each other; and therefore the desire of men to effect exchanges is the reason of supply and demand equating themselves, this being a necessary feature and concomitant of exchange. The tendency to an *equation* is not the mainspring of the movement, but the tendency to an *exchange*.

It may be thought, perhaps, that I am forgetting the part which Mill attributes to *competition*, where he says, "if unequal at any moment, competition



equalizes them ;” of which he then gives a full and striking picture. I am far from forgetting it ; it is the very point I am about to insist on as essential. Mill replaces the tendency to *equation*, which is not manageable, by *competition*, which is ; in other words, he returns to the *real* agencies, namely, human desires, for a real explanation of the law of value. But this explanation coincides with De Quincey’s, since the process which Mill describes as competition is a process which falls under De Quincey’s analysis into affirmative and negative values. Not that Mill’s “competition” is an adequate explanation, but that it is a process explicable by an analysis which is. It is inadequate as an explanation, because it is a mere collateral, and not the main, circumstance in exchanges. It means the contention between sellers, *who* shall sell to the purchasers, and the contention between purchasers, *who* shall buy of the sellers ; the reasons why they want to buy or to sell at all, which govern their contention, being left entirely unnoticed. The contention between the sellers and that between the buyers have their common root in a further contention between sellers and buyers, and to *this* contention the analysis must be pushed.

Here perhaps Mill would fall back on what is to



him the real agency, for he thinks, as we have seen, that supply and demand are the real agents;—no, perhaps I am again wrong, “he does *not* think thus,” he only thinks he thinks so; it is only when effectuated by competition that the tendency of supply and demand to equality is imagined by him to be an explanation. But then, in that case, his “competition” makes him, as we have seen, De Quincey’s liegeman, in spite of his formula. While if he chooses after all to stand on supply and demand alone, he has no explanation at all. For how will he then account for further changes in value, when supply and demand have once been equated (as in the illustration given), and in the teeth of their tendency to a dead level? Supply and demand once equated, what makes them ever unequal again? It is plain that we must seek our explanation, not in formulas, but in the facts and phenomena of human desires.

The force or efficacy supposed to be inherent in supply and demand, meaning as we have seen the quantities supplied and demanded, is really nothing else than the mutual *desire* of buyers and sellers to effect exchanges. The *equating* of supply and demand is but another term for the *effecting* those exchanges. The varying prices at which these are

effected represent the varying strength of the desires of purchasers for commodities and sellers for the purchase money. Finally *competition* is the name of the whole process of adjusting prices and effecting exchanges. And since competition is a process which takes place between *men*, Mill's explanation, which makes supply and demand operate only through competition, is just the same as De Quincey's, only (and this is the important point) De Quincey's is an *analysis* of the process, Mill's a mere naming and description of it, and that by a collateral feature. Supply and demand are no more the *real* regulator of value in this case, than they are in the case of indefinitely reproducible commodities. Competition governs in their name, and competition is a case of De Quincey's law.

Mill indeed makes an effort to show that supply and demand are not otiose, but really operative, by insisting that a real and actual limitation of the supply, not merely an anticipated or threatened one, is requisite to support the enhanced price of a monopolised article; and instances the Dutch East India Company destroying their spices, to enhance the value of the remainder. This, I imagine, De Quincey would readily admit. In fact, that very instance is given and dwelt on by him. (*Logic, &c.*, p. 283 note.)

Mill evidently supposes that De Quincey must deny it, for he says, "Even on Lake Superior Mr. De Quincey's huckster could not have sold his box for sixty guineas, if he had possessed two musical boxes and desired to sell them both." Very true; he could not have sold them for sixty guineas *each*; nor does De Quincey suppose that he could; for that would militate against his own law of utility or affirmative value operating to raise the price when there is a scarcity. The great utility of the musical box in the case supposed fastened entirely on its being the only one to be had. Not to forego the pleasure *of a musical box* when settling for ever in the solitudes of the far west,—this was the desire which the "huckster" is supposed to trade on. The utility or affirmative value of two musical boxes is not double the utility of one, in the case supposed. Greater it is, as guarding against accidents. And therefore, as Mill very sensibly suggests, the man who asked sixty guineas for the one would probably have taken seventy for the two.

Cases of absolute scarcity or monopoly, like this of the musical box, are distinguished only in degree from cases where the producibility of commodities in a market is limited by the quantity in store, or by the quantity expected to be in existence by or up

to a given time. The difficulty of attainment by purchasers consists, in all such cases alike, in the reluctance of sellers to part with their goods under a certain price. This kind of difficulty of attainment, or as De Quincey also calls it of negative value, of commodities is a very different thing from the difficulty which consists in reproducing commodities by expenditure of labour and capital. The obstacle in the one case is the reluctance of sellers, in the other case the stubbornness of nature. But these two obstacles exhaust the whole difficulty of attainment, or negative value of commodities in De Quincey's sense.

In consequence of these two kinds of difficulty there are two and only two ultimate cases of exchange value; one where the values oscillate *between* two extremes, which is De Quincey's "general case," the other where they oscillate *about* a central point, which is natural or cost value; the resulting value in this case being, to use De Quincey's term, a *binomial* value. The following remark will set this distinction in a yet clearer light. Mill fancies that commodities fall of themselves under different laws of exchange value, owing to differences affecting their production. He makes three classes of commodities, each governed by a different law of value;

first, commodities which are not reproducible at pleasure; these, he holds, are really governed chiefly by supply and demand, as we have seen. Secondly come commodities which are reproducible at pleasure, in equal amounts by equal expenditure of labour and capital, which commodities are governed by the laws of natural and market value. And thirdly, commodities which are reproducible, but only in decreasing additional amounts by equal additional amounts of labour and capital; and these "form an intermediate class partaking of the character of both the others." (*Principles, &c.*, Book III. ch. v. § 1.)

One inconvenience of this classification (to say nothing of graver defects) is, that the important class of agricultural produce is considered as belonging both to the first and to the third head. (*Ibid.* ch. ii. § 4, compared with ch. v. § 1.) In fact, without introducing commodities which are to some extent reproducible, Mill would have found himself reduced to a class of comparatively unimportant cases, from which to draw instances of supply and demand appearing to govern variations in value. Another inconvenience is, that the differences affecting the production of commodities of the second and third classes affect primarily only one element of

their value, namely, the element of natural value which reflects the cost of production. They cannot, then, serve as a basis of distinction between cases of value one of which consists of natural and market value in combination ; though they may give rise to subordinate distinctions within that single case.

Now the remark I would make is this, that the differences of commodities arising from laws of their *production*, and the classification founded on them, have nothing whatever to do, as Mill fancies, with the ultimately different laws of exchange value under which they fall. There are two and only two ultimately different cases or laws of exchange value ; and even Mill's third case is only a mixture of his first and second. These two ultimate cases are : (1) oscillation of values *between* extreme limits, and (2) oscillation of values *about* a central point. And all commodities, of whatever kind, fall now under the one case, now under the other, according as circumstances (which may be temporary or may be permanent) either keep the natural or cost value operative in determining the price, or else suspend its operation.

Among the circumstances which temporarily suspend its operation are overproduction, which means a possible supply for the market exceeding a possible

demand; and destruction or scarcity of products, which means a possible supply falling short of a possible demand; both of which are cases showing the connection between crises of depression or activity in trade and the ordinary laws of value. The safe and steady condition of prosperity is when the natural value is kept fully operative in determining the price.

Another most important case is that of labour and wages. This belongs always to the first head, that of oscillation between extremes. Labour, which is *work* or *service*, is not strictly a *commodity*; it has no cost of production, and therefore no natural value; for the minimum of sustenance (and keeping up the number) of labourers is not cost of production of labour; it is a minimum estimated by the labourers themselves. Similarly, that part of capital sometimes called the wages-fund has no cost of production; it lies in estimation of the capitalists. The labour market therefore consists of exchanges following the law of oscillation between extremes; or, if we choose to consider labour as a *commodity*, then it is a commodity in determining the value of which the operation of cost of production must also be considered as permanently suspended.

Or again, the suspension of its operation may arise from circumstances extraneous to industry, as



in the musical box case, or old works of art, or wherever the limitations are fixed by nature, as in desirable sites for building purposes; or partially extraneous, as in a great haul of fish, rendering them for a time extraordinarily cheap. All alike are instances of the same relation between the two kinds of oscillation, which relation may accordingly be expressed as follows: the oscillation between extremes *is a case of* the oscillation about a centre *with its central point knocked out*. Or thus, which is perhaps preferable: the case of oscillation between extremes is a case of *market value alone*, without natural value to steady it; market value *alone* meaning nothing else than this, the desire of purchasers for commodities interacting with the desire of sellers for the purchase money. Unity of principle is thus introduced into the whole subject of exchange values, and it is introduced on the basis of De Quincey's analysis.

The analysis of the general case of exchanges, oscillation between extremes, into the elements of affirmative and negative value is claimed by De Quincey as his own; he gives it in his own right and not as an expositor of Ricardo (*Logic, &c.*, p. 309-10); and it is one of his titles to rank as a discoverer in political economy. Still, as it stands



in De Quincey, it is not perfectly complete. He does not, I think, see *why* there are two and only two ultimate cases of value, namely, because there are two and only two sources of difficulty of attainment, or negative value; at least he nowhere explicitly contra-distinguishes these two kinds of difficulty in connection with the two cases. But on the other hand his analysis not only perfectly harmonises with the fact when perceived, but without his analysis, which leads directly up to it, its perception would have been impossible, and the logical unity of the whole subject of exchange value consequently unattainable.

Let us now see, on the other side, to what Mill's conception of supply and demand as the regulator of value leads. It leads among other things to the wages-fund theory, which, along with it, has cost his disciple Mr. Thornton so much trouble to demolish. The following passage not only shows one of the chief features of the wages-fund theory, its doctrine of the uselessness of combination, even if extended to all the labourers in a country, to raise wages, but also shows that Mill was perfectly serious in maintaining supply and demand, as distinguished from their agent competition, to be the operative agency in determining value:

“ If it were possible for the working classes, by combining among themselves, to raise or keep up the general rate of wages, it needs hardly be said that this would be a thing not to be punished, but to be welcomed and rejoiced at. Unfortunately the effect is quite beyond attainment by such means. The multitudes who compose the working class are too numerous and too widely scattered to combine at all, much more to combine effectually. If they could do so, they might doubtless succeed in diminishing the hours of labour, and obtaining the same wages for less work. But if they aimed at obtaining actually higher wages than the rate fixed by demand and supply—the rate which distributes the whole circulating capital of the country among the entire working population—this could only be accomplished by keeping a part of their number permanently out of employment.” (*Principles, &c.*, Book V. ch. x. § 5.)

Observe that demand and supply are here severed from, and do not work through, competition. The proportion between the whole number of labourers and the whole circulating capital of the country fixes the general rate of wages. It is only within this general rate that partial differences can be determined by competition or combination. It does not occur to Mill, that a combination on the part of the whole number of labourers is a change in the *supply* of labour. And yet “ reserving a price,” as Mill says in another place, namely, in his reply to Mr. Thornton (*Dissertations and Discussions*, vol. iv.

p. 38), “ is, to all intents and purposes, withdrawing a supply.”

Mill's theory combines two disparate things, his *formula*, supply and demand, and his *agent*, competition, and he names the combination by the name of the formula. By which means he attributes, now to the formula the explanatory power due only to the agent, and now to the agent the rigidity belonging to the formula.

Mr. Thornton devotes an admirable chapter in his work *On Labour* to demolish Mill's supply and demand theory, with a special eye to the case of wages. His method of disproof consists in tearing asunder Mill's formula from Mill's agent, and then showing that under certain conditions competition governs, but that supply and demand never govern, value. All the instances by which he shows the latter point, the Dutch auction, the two horses and three purchasers at 50*l.*, and so on, are admirable and forcible illustrations of De Quincey's analysis. So also when he comes to the positive part of his proof, and shows how competition operates, his theory and De Quincey's harmonise to the letter:

“Divesting ourselves, then, of preconceived notions, and commencing the enquiry anew, we have in the first place to observe that there are two opposite extremes—

one above which the price of a commodity cannot rise, the other below which it cannot fall. The upper of these limits is marked by the utility, real or supposed, of the commodity to the customer; the lower by its utility to the dealer." (*On Labour*, p. 58.)

Mr. Thornton does not name De Quincey, of whose book he had probably never heard except as an instance of "intellectual ingenuity." But that does not destroy the fact that De Quincey had previously seen and stated the same law. Nor on the other hand does De Quincey's priority diminish in the least Mr. Thornton's merit. Comparatively it enhances it, for De Quincey had not the same obstacles to overcome; never having sat at the feet of Mr. Thornton's Gamaliel (*Ibid.* p. 52), he had not so much to unlearn.

It is only fair to say that this doctrine of the wages-fund in its objectionable form was frankly and honourably avowed and surrendered by Mill, in whom equity was one of many noble characteristics, in his reply to Mr. Thornton just quoted (p. 47).

"The doctrine hitherto taught by all or most economists (including myself) which denied it to be possible that trade combinations can raise wages, or which limited their operation in that respect to the somewhat earlier attainment of a rise which the competition of the market would have produced without them,—this doctrine is deprived of its scientific foundation, and must be thrown aside."

But he makes much smaller concession to Mr. Thornton on the general question of supply and demand. By the "scientific foundation" of which the wages-fund theory is deprived, he means, not the supply and demand doctrine, but mainly the conception of the wages-fund being inelastic. On the other question, admitting that Mr. Thornton has shown the law of supply and demand to be *incomplete*, inasmuch as variations are shown *within* it which require further accounting for, he firmly denies that he has shown it to be *erroneous*. And I much doubt whether more than this is possible by Mr. Thornton's method.

On the whole I think it may be said, that the difference between De Quincey's treatment of supply and demand and that of his critic turns out entirely to De Quincey's advantage. He does not first make an idol of a formula, then explain it away, then re-introduce it to explain the rate of wages. He looks the phenomena of exchange fairly in the face, and sees in them a creature of human wants and wishes. It is undeniable that exchanges take place at all only because men find it to their mutual advantage to make them; and therefore it is natural that changes in men's desires should govern the phenomena in the last resort. To explain them on quasi-physical

principles, simple as it seems to the empiricist, is really a far-fetched explanation, travelling into alien matter, and bringing back conceptions not germane to the phenomena. While, if it be said that it is physical *analogies* only that are employed, still their relevancy in that character must first be proved by an independent examination of the matter they are applied to. If, then, exchanges are to be understood, it is into a balance of human desires that they must be analysed. Supply and demand, as well as their vicegerent, competition, are compendious expressions for the play of certain motives, certain volitions, in human conduct. Mill treats them as formulas to be *invoked*, De Quincey as phenomena to be *analysed*. But devotees never understand, and invariably resent, analysis of their idols.

I have spoken above of the special doctrine which De Quincey contributed to the science of Political Economy. But there is another more general service which he has rendered it, and which in my opinion is of even greater importance. This consists in his treating it by the method of analysis, not of deduction, and accordingly entitling his book a *Logic* of the subject. The attempt to treat the science deductively is to say the least premature, and has brought it into great discredit.

It would seem that in all sciences whose subject matter is heterogeneous like that of political economy, I mean where human actions are mixed up with a certain group of objects like those which constitute wealth, the first thing to be done is to get a clear view of the relations which these two component parts bear to each other, and from which of the two points of view they can best be treated. In the present case the first question is, whether the science is primarily one of wealth, or of the action of exchange, a physical or a moral science.

The objection to considering it as primarily a physical science of wealth, and only subordinately a moral science of exchange, is this, that the mass and intricacy of human motives and human relations, which must be covered by it, are so great as to overwhelm the nucleus of truths which may be established by the physical part of it. I mean such truths as the advantage of division of labour, the diminishing returns from land, the Malthusian laws of population, and so on, to which Mill would have added the mechanical action of supply and demand. It is impossible to treat the science as deductive from facts like these combined with the principle of abstracting from all motives but the motive of acquisition, and from all relations but that of buyer and



seller. Unknown forces are constantly operating to disturb the results which might be reached on that basis, and even to alter the force of the motive of acquisition itself. This fact drives us to take the only alternative course, that of analysis.

But here again we are met by the same complex mass of motives and relations as before. Consequently, our first requisite is a *Logic* of the subject, in order to ascertain what are the constant and permanent laws or conditions among the vast mass of phenomena to be analysed. In looking at it thus, we soon find the chaos reducing itself to something like order. True, the *motive* of acquisition is but one motive among thousands, but the *act* of acquisition is the one sole act which combines in itself both the wealth element and the human-motive element of the science, and combines them in every instance of the act. The action of acquisition, then, is the central fact of the science; and the elements which compose it, the circumstances which attend it, in other words its conditions, are the object of its analysis, while its constant and invariable conditions are the object of its *Logic*.

The *Logic* of Political Economy, then, means the analysis of the constant conditions of acts of acquisition or, what is the same thing, of exchanges.



That is the first division of the whole science. Next comes the application of this logic, not deductively, so as to oppose to newly discovered or newly arisen facts the dictum of the so-called "inexorable laws" of the science, but tentatively, by welcoming and collecting from all quarters new and old phenomena, statistics of price, of population, of different industries, &c. &c., and then attempting to harmonise them with, and bring them as cases under, the already established constant relations of the Logic. A practical part of the science can then in the third place be founded, not directly on the Logic, but on whatever body of truths may have become established by being brought under the Logic, having first been observed and verified, which is the task of the second or experiential, hypothetical, inductive, and predictive part of the science. The widest scope is thus given for the observation of new facts, and the entertainment of new questions, in the economical field.

There is danger lest the strong re-action against the so-called deductive method, and its mathematical way of abstracting from all motives but that of buying cheap and selling dear, and then often mistaking its abstract conclusions for "inexorable laws" of human action,—there is danger lest the strong and

just re-action against this “dismal” method should lead us, being Englishmen, to indulge our favourite unbridled empiricism, and dream that Political Economy can consist of facts without theory. The true substitute for the deductive method is not the unguided empirical, but the analytic method. The *constant* relations between men in exchanging commodities for commodities, or commodities for labour, the *constant* conditions of exchanges among their conditions generally, are the object of the analytic part of the science; and this must now take the place of the deductive method, which professed to be, not like the analytic a part, but the whole of the science. We shall then have the *Logic* of the science on the one side, and its application to concrete facts on the other. That this method of dealing with the science was inaugurated by De Quincey’s *Logic of Political Economy*, is in my opinion his best, though, as we have seen, by no means his only claim to be ranked among its founders.

THE  
SUPERNATURAL IN ENGLISH POETRY:  
SHAKSPERE; MILTON; WORDSWORTH;  
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I.

“WHEN (but watch what an emphasis of thunder dwells upon that word ‘when’)—

‘When shall we three meet again—  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?’

What an orchestral crash bursts upon the ear in that all-shattering question !” It is thus that De Quincey, in one of those brief remarks of his which are worth pages of duller criticism, describes the vivid impression made upon him, when a child, by the sudden plunge *in medias res* with which *Macbeth* commences.\* And true it is, that this effect is really produced and may be consciously experienced, though perhaps less vividly, by older persons, when attention has once been drawn to it. But this is far from being the only or even the chief effect of those opening lines. Other features are noticeable in them

\* *Infant Literature*. Works, vol. i. p. 120. Hogg’s edition.

besides the "orchestral crash" of the first question. They are so framed, and they are so placed, as to produce the impression of the *reality* of the witches as supernatural beings, or rather as beings endowed with supernatural powers, and holding converse with a supernatural world.

There is another emphasis in the first line besides the strong emphasis on the word *when*; there is a secondary and weaker emphasis on the word *meet*;

"When shall we three meet again?"

The weird sisters have already been holding a conclave during the storm and the battle, and are arranging their next meeting before they part. There is a dreadful purpose in their thoughts; they are meditating the temptation and ruin of a noble soul, and watching their opportunity for the assault. The most emphatic word of all, the key-note to the *plot* of the drama, is not the first word of their brief dialogue, but the last:

*First Witch.* When shall we three meet again,  
In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

*Second Witch.* When the hurly-burly's done,  
When the battle's lost and won.

*Third Witch.* That will be ere the set of sun.

*First Witch.* Where the place?

*Second Witch.* Upon the heath.

*Third Witch.* There to meet with MACBETH."

The effect, the power, of this opening is twofold ; it fixes the whole force of our attention upon Macbeth, as the object of the as yet unrevealed designs of the witches, and it is an appeal to the imagination of the audience to accept as real the supernatural machinery by which he is about to be drawn on to his perdition. For the purposes of the play we are to believe in the real existence of the witches and their queen Hecate, and in the supernatural powers of incantation and foretelling which they possess. We are to have nothing to do with the doubts which our reason may suggest as to the possibility of such creatures. If the supernatural is imaginable, it is real enough for poetry. And the art of the poet is shown by interweaving it with the natural in such a way as to keep the natural character of the natural inviolate. It is perfectly natural that Macbeth should believe in the witches, when once he has had proof of their prophetic power ; *he* is not affected with *our* doubts on that subject, and *we* in our character of spectators pin our faith upon his.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that the witches are merely the visible personification of Macbeth's own thoughts, hopes, and wishes, merely the poet's way of expressing a soul's dallying with temptation till the temptation becomes invested with

a reality as great as if we heard it from another's mouth. Banquo as well as Macbeth sees and questions the witches ; being innocent at heart he treats them lightly, and puts the subject away, without seeking to theorise on their reality. "Would they had stayed," says Macbeth. Full of his dimly entertained projects, unquiet, and circumspect, he is for further enquiry into their nature and that of their predictions.

The air-drawn dagger and the appearance of Banquo's ghost at the supper might possibly be understood as hallucinations ; but the *reality* of the witches is necessary to the plot. To make us feel this is the first thing the poet has to do, and therefore it is that we have the witches' dialogue in the opening scene. They are creations of the poet, made out of the elements of the current popular mythology, middle things between humanity and the spirit world, having intercourse with men on one side, with Hecate on the other ; but they are realities ; indeed the chief purpose of Hecate's introduction seems to be to give reality to the witches, by supplying them with the background of a world peopled with supernatural beings, of whom they are the earthly ministers. So also in *The Tempest*, if we may compare noble things with vile, Prospero's



magic is a reality. By it he raises and allays the storm, by it creates phantoms, deals with and commands spirits. And there also the reality of the power is impressed in a similar way; for we are shown first of all its effect, the storm and the shipwreck, and then, immediately afterwards, the cause of both, in Prospero's magic art. The whole plot of *The Tempest* requires the supposition of the reality of the magic, and could not take place without it.

Prospero, the noble, wise, gentle, all-human Prospero, whose magic art is the counterpart of Shakspeare's poetry, and in whose humanity the poet mirrors and recalls his own, is the opposite pole to the witches in *Macbeth*. But opposite poles belong necessarily to the same sphere; which, in this case, is the world of magic. Human are the witches after their kind, and human after his kind is Prospero. All his dreams of ambition are centred upon earth; upon his dukedom, his home, his daughter. Whatever delight he may take in his magic lore, and the power which it gives to command and to create, it is all subordinate to his delight in those realities of earth, and is abandoned when their enjoyment is secured. The anti-pole to Prospero in the sphere of humanity (as the witches are in that of magic) is Caliban. Like the witches, Caliban is a creature of

this world, but of a far lower rank than they; his dam Sycorax was of their sort, but he, being steeped in the additional brutishness of ignorance, is destitute of the power to injure which they derive from their dealings with the supernatural.

Hecate in *Macbeth* belongs wholly to the supernatural world, the region of Fairyland, which we must suppose to be inhabited by bad as well as by beneficent spirits. Ariel in *The Tempest* belongs to Fairyland also; and these two plays give us the dealings of men, by means of magic, with the people and the powers of that world. In Ariel we get a vision of the people and powers themselves. Ariel is Shakspeare's most glorious creature in that world, his last day's work, the Adam and Eve in one, of a Lost Paradise, and his manumission by Prospero, at the conclusion of *The Tempest*, is his Paradise Regained.

The play in which Shakspeare first created the Folk of Fairyland is the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. No magic in this play but what is exerted by the fairies themselves. But the fairies, their characters, their functions, their doings, are realities. The whole play turns upon their interference with the designs and doings of men. And they are led to interfere in the first instance by the interest which

they take in the chief personages, Oberon in Hippolyta, Titania in Theseus, at whose nuptials each wishes to be present. This brings them to Athens in the nick of time to set straight, though after previously embroiling, the cross purposes of the ill-assorted pairs of lovers, and to play tricks with the amateur performers of the play to be presented on the wedding night.

The art that is here required is not to prove to the spectators the reality of these supernatural personages, for we see their whole powers displayed visibly before us. No need to bring in proof at the earliest possible point, as in the two former plays. The art required here is of a very different kind. It is to let all this real interference take place without making the human actors aware of the interference to which they are subjected. If the actors were set reasoning and questioning about the mode in which the marvels were effected, the faith of the spectators would be destroyed. Accordingly, the fairies keep themselves invisible throughout, except in one only instance, loon Bottom with the ass's pate clapped on him and his wooing by Titania; and loon Bottom quickly acquiesces in puzzle-headedness as an immutable ordinance of nature. This wooing of Titania's, moreover, is a necessary part of the scheme

framed by Oberon to punish her, belonging to the fairyland part of the whole action, upon which the denouement depends. How Theseus and Hippolyta take the matter may be seen in act v. sc. 1.

“*Hipp.* ’Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers  
speak of.

*Thes.* More strange than true.” &c.

But the spectators now know better. And the rationalism of Theseus, introduced where it is, and involving the admission of something that requires explanation, serves but to heighten the impression of reality already made on the audience.

The fairy folk of Shakspeare are men and women transposed into another key; just as the Homeric deities are, in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Were they not human in essence, we should neither take interest in them, nor could they have that kind or degree of reality which poetry requires. The whole skill of these great poets, in the article of gods and fairies, consists in the harmony of the transposition, the harmony of the changes wrought in human nature when, in consequence of changes in its conditions internal and external, in the beings themselves and in their environment, they become gods and fairies from men. Of course the change in conditions is a fiction, the change of nature is a fiction,

and therefore the being of gods and fairies is a fiction also. It is frank poetic fiction; but its harmony and consistency render it also a poetic reality; for poetic realities are those which poetry creates, not which it finds; or if, in some cases, those which it finds, yet these become poetical only so far as the poet remoulds and re-creates them. But there is this enormous difference between Homer's case and Shakspeare's, that the Gods of Homer's poetry are also the Gods of the Hellenic religion; as the one they were necessarily *true*, as the other they were necessarily *fictitious*. The bearing of this remark will be developed as we proceed.

There is yet a third branch of the supernatural represented by Shakspeare, apparitions of the departed from beyond the grave. This we have most fully in *Hamlet*. And here again we find him adopting similar means of impressing the reality as in *Macbeth* and *The Tempest*, but with much fuller wealth of resource. The whole of the first Scene, and indeed the greater part of the first Act, is devoted to the apparitions of the Ghost. Every circumstance is insisted on which can vouch for its reality, consistently with the admitted and expected mysteriousness of such manifestations; and the character of the Ghost is, if I may say so, completely

dramatised. He is a real personality. This is because the reality of the Ghost is necessary to the plot; that is, it is necessary that Hamlet should be convinced that he really sees and converses with his father's spirit, and not either (as Shakspeare's contemporaries might be tempted to imagine) with a phantom emissary of Satan, or (as moderns might speculate) with an hallucination of his own.\*

The art required in *Hamlet*, which treads upon supernatural ground far more difficult for poetry than either magic or fairyland, is different from, or rather a development of, that required in the former plays where the supernatural comes in. The illusion of the audience is to be maintained, not as in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* by withdrawing it from the observation of the actors, but more nearly as in *Macbeth*, but under greater difficulties, that is, *in spite* of the perpetual questioning and reasoning of Hamlet and the other witnesses of the apparition. This is effected chiefly by the thorough dramatisation of the Ghost, by which the spectators are kept attentive to what is going on, and not allowed to fall into a state of speculation on the possibility or mode of production of such occurrences; not allowed to

\* As to the alternative theories open to Shakspeare's contemporaries, see Mr. Spalding's *Elizabethan Demonology*, p. 55-60.

share, though they sympathise with, the speculations which torment Hamlet himself. The audience is kept in what Coleridge calls a state of *illusion*, distinguished from delusion, a state which he illustrates by comparing it to our state of mind when dreaming. "In both cases," he says, "we simply do not judge the imagery to be unreal; there is a negative reality and no more. Whatever therefore tends to prevent the mind from placing itself, or being placed, gradually in that state in which the images have such negative reality for the auditor, destroys this illusion, and is dramatically improbable."\*

But why is it that the danger is so great of the spectators falling into the speculative state, instead of being placed in the state of illusion, in the present case? It is because the theme is one which has a deep personal interest for all men, the state of the dead, the life or death beyond the grave; a theme which borders on religion; from which we have seen already how clear Shakspeare keeps himself in the two former cases of the supernatural. For the supernatural, when it is also *real*, becomes the object of a very different class of poetry from that of which the frankly impossible supernatural is the

\* *Literary Remains*, vol. ii. p. 37-8, and again p. 92.



object. In poetic theory there is no more important distinction than that between *inventive* poetry, which consists in invention of persons and things similar or analogous to the real, and *interpretative* poetry, which consists in interpretation of persons and things which *are* real. Fiction is indifferent to poetry of the first kind, but fatal to that of the second. Now *Hamlet* has a theme which borders on both; therefore it is that it is difficult ground for poetry; and therefore also Shakspeare taxes his powers to the utmost, in the opening scenes of the play and throughout, to place and keep his auditors in that state of "illusion" which is the indispensable requisite for enjoying it.

The drama is that kind of poetry which is best able to exhibit pure invention, *μίμησις* in the fullest sense of the term, in which the interest is drawn not from what the persons, events, and situations are believed to be or have been in reality, but from what the poet makes them or creates them to be. Hence Shakspeare's Histories, and historical plays generally, are not the drama developed to its full capacity, or putting forth all its powers. There is a certain *interpretative* interest involved. Hence too it comes that Shakspeare never introduces in his dramas any *real* supernatural persons or events; for that would



destroy their inventive character, and prevent their rising to the full height of their function; and so much the more, the greater the dignity or importance of the persons introduced, and the greater the interest attaching to their reality. *Hamlet* is the only play in which he touches even on the borderland of the supernatural considered as *real*. I speak, of course, only of the drama as such, that is, of the persons, plot, situations, and events; for that allusions to and dealings with the real supernatural are found in the mouths and actions of the personages of the drama,—this belongs to them in their personal capacity, and not to the drama as such. For instance, Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be," &c., and the prayer of the King, are part of the characters and not part of the framework of the play. The spectators are not required either to adopt or to reject their truth.

There is then, we may say, one kind of supernatural in which Shakspeare revels, another into which with the utmost caution he ventures, and a third which he completely avoids. There is first the supernatural of fairyland and magic; secondly the supernatural of the world beyond the grave; thirdly the supernatural of the Divine. How diametrically opposite to the practice of the Greek

tragedians ; nay, if we think of it, to the Greek drama, comic as well as tragic, and to Greek poetry generally. The supernatural of the world beyond the grave they have in common with Shakspeare ; but the extremes are reversed ; they have and he has not the supernatural of the Divine ; they have not and he has the supernatural of fairyland and magic.

But stay. What, it will be said, is the meaning of this monstrous assertion, that Greek poetry has nothing corresponding to magic, nothing to fairyland ? Has it, then, no Gorgons, no Furies, no Harpies, no Chimæras, no Centaurs, no Cyclopes, no dragons, no Hydras, no Cerberus, no Circes, no Medeas, no Cassandras, no Teiresiases, no oracles, no Nekomanteias ?—and the list might be prolonged indefinitely. Yes indeed it has ; but then,—and here is the point,—these and such as these belong to, and shade off by inseparable gradations into the *Divine* properly so called in Greek mythology. They are appurtenances of the Gods of Olympus or of Hades. And then, too, the greater Gods are connected with men by a chain of lesser deities, of demigods, and of heroes whose origin is partly divine, partly human ; and it is in attendance on the society consisting of Gods, demigods, heroes,

and men together, and as playing a part in the histories by them enacted in common, that the other miraculous and monstrous creatures of the mythology have their being and their function.

Thus they belong, one and all, not to the first division of Shakspeare's supernatural, but to the last. In point of *reality*, reality not depending solely on the creation of poets, but partly on popular belief prior to it, they and the Divine in Greek poetry stand or fall together. Shakspeare by scrupulously abstaining from introducing the Divine, while he revels in the creations of fairyland and magic, draws a broad distinction, sets a deep gulf, between the two domains; and this separation it is which is absent in Greek poetry. True, Greek poetry has an abundant creation of beings analogous to those which people Shakspeare's domain of fairyland and magic, but not as distinguished from the domain of the divine, not as a supernatural which is fictitious, distinguished from a supernatural which is real.

The absence of the divine from Shakspeare's drama, as compared with the Greek, entails therefore a narrowing of its field, by the exclusion of one whole section of human relations, and that the one from which the greater part of the motives of the Greek

drama was taken. Poetry in the drama of Shakspeare, like philosophy in the teaching of Socrates, is recalled from heaven to earth, from the relations of man with God to the relations of man with man. At the same time there is a deepening of the narrowed stream; greater subjectivity; a minuter picturing and a more studied development of emotion; character becoming more important than situation; and, of the two inseparable elements, action on the one hand, emotion and character on the other, the former plainly subordinate to the latter, not *vice versa* as in Greek practice, and in direct reversal of a famous dictum of Aristotle's. The *mind of man* in its nature and its action is the real subject of Shakspeare's art, and not merely certain situations in which man may be placed, calculated to move pity and fear, and by the dramatic treatment of which the inordinate and painful energy of those affections may be moderated and allayed.\* Consider the contrast, for instance, between the sublimest of Greek dramas, the *Agamemnon*, its action concentrated on a single day, a group of living sculpture rather than an action, and the development of character in Shakspeare's *Macbeth*, or his *Lear*, or more striking

\* See for this interpretation of Aristotle's well-known definition of tragedy, J. Bernays' *Zwei Abhandlungen über die Aristotelische Theorie des Drama*. Berlin, 1880.

still, owing to the shortness of the time occupied, his *Othello*. And as to the other point noticed, the absence of the divine in Shakspeare, where can we find in him a parallel to the *Prometheus* of the same great Greek master; where to the *Bacchæ* of Euripides; where to the *Frogs* of Aristophanes? The Greeks kept the divine as a subject of dramatic poetry, but at the same time, and as a necessary consequence, subordinated it to the conditions of fiction, along with those parts of the supernatural which were avowedly fabulous.

Between these two salient characteristics of Shakspeare's dramas, the exclusion of the divine and the subjectivity in the development of character, between what I have called the *narrowing* and the *deepening* of the stream,—what connection? Or is there any connection between them other than accidental? A connection there certainly is, a motive so natural and so weighty that we may easily suppose a mind like Shakspeare's would have at once perceived and eagerly acted on it, even had he stood alone and apart from the historical conditions which determined the course of the English Drama as a whole.

The entire drama of modern Europe grew up under the pressure of a dogmatic religious creed.

The relations of man with the Divine belonged therefore to ground which was, and was universally considered to be, the domain of *truth* ; and for that reason these relations must have seemed to one who was bent on giving full rein to his inventive and imaginative powers peculiarly unfitted to be the subjects of a freely fictive or inventive art, as in Greece they were, and that not in tragedy only but in comedy also.

But in fact the adoption of this course, the exclusion of religious subjects from the drama, was not Shakspeare's or any single individual's doing. It was determined by circumstances which acted on the nation at large. In saying that the modern drama grew up under the pressure of a religious creed, I have said far too little. It not only did so, but it was in its origin an acted representation of the creed itself and of its adjuncts. Scripture and sacred legendary history were the original subjects of it, acted by and under the direction of the clergy, both in the churches and elsewhere. It was out of the Mysteries, Miracle Plays, and Moralities, that, in England, the secular drama was developed ; out of these it was born, and these it left behind it, as an immortal spirit might leave its earthly body, at the epoch when England awoke to conscious energetic

national life, under Elizabeth as the champion of the Protestant Reformation.\*

This state of things Shakspeare made not, but found. A secular drama was the condition of the putting forth of his powers, and mediately of the full development of the drama itself. Steps of this kind are never retraced. Wherever the drama is developed to its full height as a freely fictive and inventive art, the creations of which are human characters in action, there the relations of man to the Divine are excluded from the drama. How in fact *can* religion be brought upon the stage, which represents the spoken intercourse of man with man, when in real life the religious feelings are never made the subject of debate or conversation? But they still remain, and remain as of right, the proper and indeed the highest subject of interpretative poetry, as they are, for instance, in Dante's *Divina Commedia*.

At the same time, the dogmatic religious creed was not without influence on the drama, as on all departments of art, even where it called out a hostile anti-religious or non-religious re-action. The whole train of human thoughts became more serious, more reflective, more introspective, in consequence. Man's

\* See the full account of this in Professor Ward's admirable *History of English Dramatic Literature*, vol. i. chapters i.-iii.

relations with the Divine, with the unseen world, were made the object of continual meditation, enquiry, doubt, speculation. There was a whole definite code of divine and moral truth, continually present, and continually asserting its rightful supremacy over conduct, and what is more over belief. The creed was the embodiment of an intimately spiritual religion. This forced men to reflect on what they were, and how their minds and souls were constituted.

In considering the causes which influenced the development of the Elizabethan drama, much, I think, must be held to be due to the deeply seated and hereditary character of the nation, as well as to the circumstances of its history. The point in which the English, in common with other Teutonic races, differs most fundamentally from the Greek seems to have been this, that where the Greeks had the mimetic tendency in great strength, that is, the tendency to imitate by inventing or constructing something, they on the other hand had in corresponding strength the tendency to utter and express something, not for the sake of the thing to be uttered, whatever it might be, but for relief to themselves by giving vent to something which until uttered was a burden. It was the very same tendency and disposition which in social and political



matters appeared as the love of individual independence and freedom. On this nature it was that the dogmatic creed was brought to bear.

The Greek drama on the other hand developed under no such pressure. Out of the common ground of the rich popular mythology, of foreign as well as native origin, Greek literature developed in two different directions, that of poetry by an exercise of imagination in search of beauty, and that of philosophy by an exercise of reason in search of truth. Their poetry was the product of that spontaneous delight in imitation, *μίμησις*, which is natural to all men, and which was peculiarly powerful in the Greeks. The whole of their mythology was submitted to the freely inventive treatment in which the tendency to imitation displays itself. There is no more subtil or profound truth in Aristotle than his apparently obvious remark that the tendency to imitate is the root of poetry, joined as it is with the fact that he made of that truth the basis of his whole theory of poetry. He *dared* to build his theory on what might appear to many a trivial commonplace; for he saw not the fact only, but its connections and its import. Such remarks as these it is, found everywhere in Aristotle's works and relating to all departments of thought, such remarks as these it is which

stamp him as the greatest of philosophers, for their significance is of that kind which time alone can fully bring to light.

The remark that poetry is imitation is found in Plato, and that frequently. But in what sense does Plato understand it, and what use does he make of it? He uses it to show that the best poet, he who can imitate best, must be the man who best understands the things and persons imitated, as if imitation meant *copying*, and the poet was in pursuit of *truth*. Hence he maintains that poets ought to be tutored by the state as to what they ought to imitate and how, so as to produce the best effect on the young; and thus he subordinates poetry to educational purposes. But is that Aristotle's meaning of imitation? No. The deep-seated tendency, and the deep-seated delight in the exercise of the tendency, to *produce* creations similar to those of nature, that is Aristotle's *imitation*; and this is a tendency which, in his view, cannot be subordinated to educational purposes alone, but is a *power* which must be reckoned with, cultivated, and made the most of.

Now we can understand Plato's objection to the poets of his own country. They did not represent the Gods conformably to the *truth* of the divine nature. They invented Gods by their free fictive

handling of the mythology ; they invented when they ought to copy. But copy what ? Copy, replies Plato, the Idea of the Divine, the truth of the divine nature ; produce, in images, a system of moral and religious philosophy. That was what Plato wanted, and that was just what Greek poetry never did and never could supply ; though to force it to do so, to wring from the mythology, essentially inventive, a deep religious significance, if not through, then independently of the poets, was the main purpose of the Neo-platonic philosophy in later times, which was, in intention, at once a mythology, a religion, and a philosophy.

Nevertheless the appearance of Plato, basing himself as he did on the Socratic intuitions which aimed at bringing down philosophy to practice, and were the origin of Ethic as the science of practice, marks an epoch, a stage of development, in the mental history of Greece which is of the highest interest and importance. It was the beginning of a moral and religious dogma for Greece. It extricated religion from the mythology, and in lieu thereof embodied it in a philosophy. It was just because Plato saw more clearly and felt more deeply than his fellow countrymen what religion *was*, that he was dissatisfied with its mythological embodiment. He attached

it therefore to a creed, or philosopheme, of pure Monotheism. He provided a new body for it, and attempted to effect its metempsychosis. Religion was to animate monotheism.

Contrast this development of the Greek with that of the Hebrew mental history; for both alike are integrations, organic developments towards increasing complexity and greater interdependence of parts; and both alike have a large fund of mythological and popular tradition, both self-sown and extraneous, at their origin. Why is it that their several courses, starting from sources so similar, are so widely divergent; why is it that the Hebrew race produces no Drama and no Philosophy comparable to those of Greece, but in lieu thereof produces two religions in succession, a mother and a daughter, Judaism and Christianity?

It is impossible to pretend to assign the ultimate, the absolutely first and deepest, cause or causes of national character and national destiny. But so far as we are enabled to penetrate, so far as we can assign the determining circumstances or traits in the history of nations, upon which other traits and circumstances depend,—this we may attempt. Let us then take that retrospective speech in which, at the birth of the younger religion, its first martyr reviewed

the history of the old, and connected it with that of the new gospel. It has a ring very different from the Greek :

“ Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken : The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldæans, and dwelt in Charran : and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.”\*

And add to this the comment by another writer :

“ By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed : and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise : for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”†

Now whatever may be legendary in this or other parts of Hebrew history, two things are clear, first, that there was through all their known history a succession of men who acted on this principle of faith in God, as Abraham is here represented to have done ; and secondly, that this characteristic was consciously reflected on and adopted, with appeal to the history

\* Acts vii. 2-4.

† Hebrews xi. 8-10.

of the past, by the best and noblest of the Hebrews themselves. They lived as children of a heavenly father, and this supernatural relation was to them not a fiction, not a mythological legend, but a fact and a truth. Had they made dramas or Iliads, had they made even philosophemes, out of *that*, it would have shown that they did not believe it. The very same circumstance and trait of character, which gave them a *religion*, denied them a drama and denied them a philosophy. Not that either drama or philosophy is incompatible with religion, but that, if a nation is mentally and morally endowed with capacities for all, it can only harmoniously develop them on the condition of keeping distinct and separate their several domains, objects, and methods of pursuing them. The Hebrews had that which Plato longed for; they had the religion, they had the soul, which he wished, and wished in vain, to create for the Greeks under the ribs of his philosophical monotheism.

It will perhaps be worth while to cast a brief glance at the general corresponding development of modern Europe. The Greek and Hebrew developments are integrations; what is in them they develop into fuller organisation; the Greeks, as we have seen, into a drama and a philosophy, the Hebrews

into an elaborate code of law, and, partly owing to their contact with other nations, into a creed about the soul and a future life. But the nations of modern Europe grew up from childhood under instruction; I mean under the instruction of the Church, which consisted of certain Jewish and Christian legends, adopted as authentic history, and made the basis of a theory of the world, which in the shape of creed or catechism was universally taught. It was a *theory* as well as a religion, it was a religion and a philosophy in one. The Church itself, though claiming to have its creeds founded solely on faith guaranteed by authority, yet, by the mere fact of having creeds at all, necessarily appealed to *reason*. Philosophy was thus, for the disciples of the Church, a necessity, and that philosophy was necessarily a disintegrating one. It disintegrated the very instruction of the Church, out of which it sprang. But under the ribs of that instruction, unlike Plato's, there was a living soul, a spiritual religion, the same spiritual religion in essence as that which animated and supported the Hebrew nation. There was a real and true supernatural, the Divine, to be kept sacred from poetic fiction. There was a philosophy to be reconstructed in harmony with that sacred truth. And there was the abundant energy and delight in poetic



creation, which was not denied to the people of northern any more than to those of southern Europe, or to the inhabitants of southern Europe who were brought by Roman conquest and government under the influence of Greek thought, any more than to the Greeks themselves. "For the same climate and many of the same circumstances were acting on them," says Coleridge,\* speaking of the early Romance and Italian writers, "which had acted on the great classics, whom they were endeavouring to imitate. But the love of the marvellous, the deeper sensibility, the higher reverence for womanhood, the characteristic spirit of sentiment and courtesy,—these were the heir-looms of nature, which still regained the ascendant, whenever the use of the living mother-language enabled the inspired poet to appear instead of the toilsome scholar."

Thus the nations of modern Europe, northern and southern alike, begin as it were with national characters and tendencies of their own, with their own traditions, religious rites, and social customs; and upon these supervene, first, the religion of Christianity; secondly the dogmatic theories in philosophy and history taught by the Church; thirdly the knowledge of classical thought and

\* *Literary Remains*, vol. i. p. 80.



literature; and lastly the great discoveries in science, both theoretical and practical. All these elements had to be harmonised and organised when modern Europe rose, at the time of the renaissance, from the childhood of the middle ages; and each nation took a course of its own in harmonising and organising them, according to the difference of its own particular character, and to the different incidence of its condition and circumstances. Greece and Judæa were integrations; we moderns are an integration and a disintegration together; that is, we are a re-integration into fuller, more complex, more distinct, yet at the same time more interdependent modes of moral, intellectual, and imaginative life.

## II.

AND now with the foregoing remarks as our clue, let us turn to Milton, the next poet on our list, and to his paramount work, the *Paradise Lost*. In the first place, it is to be observed of this poem, that as an Epic it belongs to the class of interpretative poetry. In all Epic poetry some great and well-known event is taken as the theme, something

which is already in possession of the popular mind, and which is the centre of a whole cluster of varied interests. To picture this great central event vividly, to make the actors in it live before the mental vision, to adorn and set it forth with subordinate details and episodes, to magnify its grandeur and enhance its beauty, in one word to *interpret* the theme proposed, is the aim of the Epic poet. It is obvious that invention is not excluded, but it is included as a means to the end of interpretation. Just as a great landscape painter both modifies the actual features and invents others in the scene he paints; just as a sculptor exhibits an ideal statue of a Plato or a Demosthenes; so the epic poet gives us an ideal picture of the wars of Achilles or of Charlemagne. But the theme must have been a real one; it must already be in possession, at least by means of its *name*, of the public mind; the chief characters must be at once historical and important; it is not *any* group of characters that will serve the turn. No epic poem could have been made of *King Lear*; for even though a king and a kingdom are involved, they are of no significance in the world's or a nation's history, and the whole story is "of private interpretation."

Interpretative poetry is the second of the three

great divisions into which poetry falls when it is classified by its aims. In all practical sciences, that is, those that have action or practice as their subject-matter, of which literary criticism is one, the purpose aimed at is the proper basis of classification. Poetry so considered falls into the three great kinds of inventive, interpretative, and effusive, that is to say, expressive of feeling ; and to these kinds belong respectively dramatic, narrative (of which epic is a branch), and lyric poetry. In the present paper I shall have no need to touch upon poetry of the effusive or lyric kind.

The story of *Paradise Lost* is taken from that legendary history which was part of the dogmatic teaching of the Church. The transgression of a divine command by the two parents of mankind, when tempted by the serpent, entails their expulsion from Paradise, and introduces death into the world. The relations between the divine and human are therefore everywhere involved; and Milton avows that it is his main purpose to

“assert eternal Providence,  
And justify the ways of God to Men.”

Milton's poem therefore is something more than an Epic ; its theme is something more than a story of well-known historical though legendary import-

ance and interest, such as the story of Troy or of Roncesvalles. It has a didactic, or rather say a *theoretical*, purpose also. It is an epic poem and a theological treatise in one. It is the Protestant *Divina Commedia*. But whereas Dante, writing at the close of the middle ages, as the mouthpiece of Scholasticism triumphant, and guided only by the example of Latin literature, felt it to be his task to exhibit the relations between God and man in a cosmology, Milton on the other hand, writing under the full influence of Greek models, and when Luther's re-proclamation of the great doctrine of justification by faith had made the question of free-will a vital question with every reflecting man, was irresistibly impelled to make that question the turning-point of his theology. Dante endeavours to show how man can be justified before God; Milton, how God can be justified before man. This is an advance in subjectivity. The human *conscience* is felt to be the supreme tribunal, and to contain the ultimate criterion, in all the judgments which *man* has to pass for his own guidance, on all subjects whether in heaven or on earth.

Milton ! Titan that thou art, strong, pure, faithful, dauntless Titan, didst even thou fully contemplate, at the moment of decision, the magnitude

of thy self-elected task? Canst thou indeed be theologian and poet in one, and that in an age not of faith but of reason, nor yet at a moment when reason, having run full circuit, is returning as by an ascending spiral into the atmosphere of a purer faith, but at the moment when that circuit is but beginning, and a long period of doubt and darkness intervenes between thee and thy promised resting place? Imperial soul, may I and all who may be called to form a judgment, to the extent of our ability, upon thy transcendent work, seeing the defeatures writ there by the ambiguous character of its scope, reflect how great and glorious that work must be, which even these defeatures are not sufficient to obscure!

Milton has recently been criticised, with regard to his pictures of the supernatural and man's relation to it, from two opposite points of view. First from the moral, or perhaps we may say theological, point of view, by Mr. Ruskin.\* Both Dante and Milton, he says, were men who tried "to discover and set forth, as far as by human intellect is possible, the facts of the other world." He then says that "Milton's account of the most important event in his whole system of the universe, the fall of the

\* *Sesame and Lilies*, pp. 138, 139.

angels, is evidently unbelievable to himself," and farther that "the rest of his poem is a picturesque drama, in which every artifice of invention is visibly and consciously employed ; not a single fact being, for an instant, conceived as tenable by any living faith." A similar account is given of Dante, and then he proceeds thus :

"I tell you truly that, as I strive more with this strange lethargy and trance in myself, and awake to the meaning and power of life, it seems daily more amazing to me that men such as these should dare to play with the most precious truths, (or the most deadly untruths,) by which the whole human race listening to them could be informed, or deceived ;—all the world their audiences for ever, with pleased ear, and passionate heart ;—and yet, to this submissive infinitude of souls, and evermore succeeding and succeeding multitude, hungry for bread of life, they do but play upon sweetly modulated pipes ; with pompous nomenclature adorn the councils of hell ; touch a troubadour's guitar to the courses of the suns ; and fill the openings of eternity, before which prophets have veiled their faces, and which angels desire to look into, with idle puppets of their scholastic imagination, and melancholy lights of frantic faith in their lost mortal love."

This lofty, pure, and impassioned criticism amounts, on its logical side, to neither more nor less than insisting that Milton ought to have dropped out of view and made no account of the

*poetic* element in his own aim, retaining only the *theoretical*, which in this case is the *theological*, element in it, and ceasing entirely to be a *poet*. To Mr. Ruskin, the poetry spoils the theology. It is precisely the same principle of criticism as we found above in Plato : that poets are to “imitate” nothing but truth ; and that, so far as poets are inventors, they are only bad philosophers, and ought to learn their business better. If Milton speaks of theology at all, so I understand Mr. Ruskin to mean, he ought to speak seriously of it, and tell us only what he really believes, not what he obviously invents.

Mr. Ruskin's views are criticised from an opposite point of view by Mr. Mark Pattison, in his recent *Life of Milton*. Quoting from passages which immediately precede the above long citation, Mr. Pattison insists that “Milton felt himself to be standing on the sure ground of fact and reality.”\* And I think it is undeniable that Milton believed firmly in a definite basis of fact underlying his whole poem, underlying his picture of the Deity, of the celestial and the rebel angels, of the powers exerted by both the latter on man, of the garden, of the first created pair, of the temptation, fall, and exile. What he *invented* was the particular mode in which a human

\* English Men of Letters. *Milton*, p. 186.

mind could best picture to itself the realisation of these supernatural truths. As Professor Masson says, in his invaluable work :\*

“In the cosmology of *Paradise Lost*, and indeed in the whole matter and tenor of the epic, Milton, it is interesting to know, was true, as far as a poet could be true, to his personal beliefs. What appears as grand song and free imagination in the poem may be seen reduced to the dry bones of corresponding theological proposition in his Latin Treatise of Christian Doctrine.”

And again :

“Milton is careful to explain that all that he says of Heaven is said symbolically, and in order to make conceivable by the human imagination what in its own nature is inconceivable ; but this being explained, he is bold enough in his use of terrestrial analogies.”†

If I have rightly understood Mr. Ruskin's criticism, then Mr. Pattison's reply, that “Milton felt himself to be standing on the sure ground of fact and reality,” is true, but does not meet the objection. For the objection is that, whether he felt himself on sure ground or not, he ought not to have used poetic *invention* to expound it ; that the solemnity and deep importance of the subject ought to have exempted it from a fictive treatment. In this

\* *The Life of John Milton*, vol. vi. p. 536.

† *Ibid.* p. 538.



he seems to me to *Platonise* indeed, but not to mistake Milton's real relation to his theme.

But Mr. Pattison has a further objection of his own against Milton, namely, that he selected a theme which he wrongly thought could never lose its hold over the imagination, whereas it has lost much and is day by day losing more of that hold, and is in danger of becoming in the end wholly uninteresting:

"Strange to say, this failure of vital power in the constitution of the poem is due to the very selection of subject by which Milton sought to secure perpetuity. Not content with being the poet of men, and with describing human passions and ordinary events, he aspired to present the destiny of the whole race of mankind, to tell the story of creation, and to reveal the councils of heaven and hell. And he would raise this structure upon no unstable base, but upon the sure foundation of the written word. It would have been a thing incredible to Milton that the hold of the Jewish Scriptures over the imagination of English men and women could ever be weakened. This process, however, has already commenced. The demonology of the poem has already, with educated readers, passed from the region of fact into that of fiction. Not so universally, but with a large number of readers, the angelology can be no more than what the critics call machinery. And it requires a violent effort from any of our day to accommodate our conceptions to the anthropomorphic theology of *Paradise Lost*. Were the sapping process to continue at the same rate for two

more centuries, the possibility of epic illusion would be lost to the whole scheme and economy of the poem.”\*

Let me reply to this criticism in the first place, that the poem is chiefly one that describes “human passions and ordinary events.” The interest gathers round the incidents of the temptation and the fall. Everything is subordinate to that central moment of faithfulness, tenderness, and despair, when Adam takes his resolution of conscious disobedience :

“Should God create another Eve, and I  
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee  
Would never from my heart ! no, no ! I feel  
The link of nature draw me : flesh of flesh,  
Bone of my bone, thou art, and from thy state  
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe !”†

Such is Milton’s picture of Adam’s transgression ; on which we feel Milton’s own comment to be unfair, when he says that Adam was

“not deceiv’d,  
But fondly overcome with female charm.”‡

It is nobility not weakness of nature, chivalrous affection not female charm, that inspire his resolution.

That little history of “human passions and ordinary events,” of which this is the central and deci-

\* English Men of Letters. *Milton*, p. 199-200.

† Book IX. v. 911.

‡ *Ibid.* v. 998.

sive incident, that little history it is, to which the whole universe, its divine and angelic inhabitants, their politics and their wars, are designed as the setting. That is the jewelled boss of the sculptured orbicular shield. That is where our interests are engaged, however inferior in magnitude to its gorgeous surroundings. It is the necessary pre-supposition of the cosmology and angelology; they are necessary if we are to have a poem on the fall of man; but we might easily have had a cosmology or a rebellion of angels, without making the fall of man a prominent feature or even introducing it at all.

Satan, it has been often said, is the real "hero" of the poem. But not so, I would reply; Satan may be the hero of the "setting," but Adam is the chief actor in the whole. A defeated and disgraced actor it is true; but that does not interfere with Milton's conception of "heroic" action:

"Sad task, yet argument  
Not less but more heroic than the wrath  
Of stern Achilles on his foe pursu'd  
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage  
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespous'd,  
Or Neptune's ire or Juno's, that so long  
Perplex'd the Greek and Cytherea's son."\*

In fact, whatever vastness of scale, whatever gran-

\* Book IX. v. 13.

deur or magnificence of action and character, is introduced into the setting, really and in truth redounds to magnify the moral and spiritual significance of the centre,—the puny action on the tiny planet,—of which that grandeur is the setting merely.

But the part of Mr. Pattison's criticism to which I wish particularly to call attention is the position, that "were the sapping process to continue at the same rate for two more centuries, the possibility of epic illusion would be lost to the whole scheme and economy of the poem," for this is the point which touches the functions and bearing of the supernatural in interpretative poetry. To me it seems that the effect of the sapping, supposing it completed, would be the very reverse. We should then stand to the *Paradise Lost* precisely as we stand to the *Iliad* or to the *Æneid*. We should then frankly accept the supernatural machinery, and the "epic illusion" (not *delusion*) would be comparatively easy. As it is, many readers are in that fatal middle state of speculation concerning the supernatural machinery, wishing and wishing in vain for illusion, because they think that *delusion* is still possible. When we can frankly dismiss the claim of the supernatural machinery to be truth, and not till then, we

shall be able frankly to accept it as a poetic reality. Till then, Mr. Pattison's "violent effort" is really required.

My own objection, for I have one, is of a very different kind. It is founded on the distinction drawn above, between the real and the unreal supernatural. There is a *real* supernatural in the *Paradise Lost*, and Milton has treated it precisely as he has treated the unreal. This real supernatural can never be sapped, and consequently the illusion can never be perfect. The illusion is endangered, not, as Mr. Pattison supposes, because we do not believe in the good and bad angels and other similar parts of the supernatural machinery, but because they and it are employed to embody, and render comprehensible, spiritual mysteries which we do earnestly believe, namely, the existence of God and his relation to man as the God of conscience.

Milton in *Paradise Lost* is in fact disintegrating the Christian mythology, just as Homer disintegrated the Greek, namely, by imagining it and constructing it. God cannot be embodied in imagery, but transcends it. He is therefore secure from any disintegration by poets. Milton's representation dwarfs him, indeed; makes him a finite and particular being; makes him a "magnified man,"

to use Mr. Matthew Arnold's phrase, present in one part of space and absent from another, and issuing commands which may be and are disobeyed. Yet, since God himself transcends all such imagery, since the *truth* of the theology *cannot* be spoilt by this idolising process, but remains secure beyond it, therefore I say (what is the exact converse of Mr. Ruskin's objection, as I understand it), *not* that the poetry in Milton spoils the theology, but that the theology spoils, or tends to spoil, the poetry. The poetry, the disintegrating and dwarfing poetry, is the means of extricating it from its swaddling clothes, and is itself endangered in the attempt. Observe how thoroughly and truly poetical are all those parts of the poem, where the angels debate and act, compared to those scenes in heaven, where God himself is introduced declaring his counsels. Those parts which involve belief are not poetical; those which do not involve it are. The angels really are magnified and fictitious men; but Divinity transcends the model. Now, in Homer's case, the disintegrating process found no truth, behind the mythology, to be extricated. But in Milton's we have the conscience of man disengaged, and that carries with it the Divine Law and the Divine Existence to which it refers.

Milton seems to have imagined that poetry was commensurate with religion, that the highest imagery of poetry, which according to his own definition of it must be "simple, sensuous, passionate," could give something like an idea of the infinite object of religion; whereas in truth that object exceeds it by as much as the infinite exceeds the furthest step we can take, the furthest ground we can win, or any concept or image we can frame, in an *indefinite* approach towards it.

This also shows how it is that the free-will question is not solved in the poem. Anything imagined less than, or within, the infinite is part of the chain of cause and effect. God therefore, imagined as Milton imagines him, is a *caused* being, and therefore cannot be the *source of freedom* to the universe, or to man. But man stands in relation to that excess of the infinite over the highest step in the above-mentioned indefinite approach towards it, and therefore his free-will can be proved only by showing that it comes from that source, that is, belongs to man from eternity, having a source as deep as that of necessity itself.

Now a problem raised by and involved in the intimate structure and plot of a poem is dangerous if not fatal to its poetry, unless it is solved and de-

problematised, so to speak, from the first. It is a "foreign body" in the poem. And in Milton it is plain that the problem is not only not solved at first, but not at all; the "ways of God to men" are *not* justified therein. Indeed the difficulty is made worse, for it is transferred to the fallen angels, to Satan, and thereby mixed up with a different and harder problem still, one which is, I imagine, for ever insoluble, the origin of evil. But here, the dwarfing of God tends to justify Satan, by preventing us from feeling his pride and self-sufficiency as an enormity. The same fatal contradiction, of picturing God as a finite being, prevents the solution of the free-will problem not on the human plane only, but also on the world plane, in the angelic instance.

We can now perhaps form some idea of the surpassing grandeur and beauty of that poem which faults like these are unable to ruin. As I would say to the poets themselves with reference to theology,—Do your worst; dwarf, disintegrate, disillusion; you *cannot* destroy the Divine: so I would say to critics who carp and cavil,—Do your worst, you cannot destroy *Paradise Lost*. So long as there lives a spark of poetic imagination in the world of readers, it will be kindled into flame by this glorious poem.



Such, then, and so great is Milton's *Paradise Lost* considered as a poem, considered by itself. But now the question occurs, what is its place and that of its author in comparison with other poems and other poets, what is its relation and what is its significance in the history of poetry? Shakspeare, we have seen, as a dramatic poet, excluded the real supernatural from his dramas; Milton as an epic poet brings it into his *Paradise Lost*, but makes no difference in his treatment of it and his treatment of the fictitious supernatural. The question is, what is the real supernatural, and can it be treated by poetry at all?

The term *supernatural* has two widely different meanings. First it designates whatever interferes, as from a higher region, with the order of nature, and in this sense it includes the miraculous and the beings who produce miraculous effects. Secondly it designates whatever belongs to the unseen world, that is, the world which is beyond human ken, but which we conceive as connected with the seen world, which it surrounds, by one and the same order of nature. What I have called the real supernatural belongs to this unseen world, and is supernatural in the second sense; while the fictitious supernatural

belongs to the miraculous, and is supernatural in the first sense of the term.

Milton, by his subjective and interpretative treatment of the problem of free-will, helped to disentangle for others the real supernatural, and distinguish it deeply from the fictitious supernatural in point of figurability by poetic imagery. It was shown by Milton's failure to be radically incapable of being so figured, to be transcendent of all possible poetic imagery. But was it therefore to be excluded from *all* manner of treatment by interpretative poetry? At first sight it might seem so, for what other means, it might be asked, but the means of imagery, could poetry possess, whereby it might be reached and secured? And the long torpor into which the poetic imagination fell, in England, in the grovelling period which began with the Restoration, and continued down to near the close of the eighteenth century, might seem to set the seal upon its grave.

But an awakening was at hand. At a time when the human faculties seemed to be completely mapped and marshalled, and the various existences of the world to be definitely apportioned and appropriated as the objects of those faculties each to each, so that no place was left for the Divine; for, if it could not

be figured by poetry, *a fortiori* it could not be construed by science; and if it could not be construed by science, then it seemed to follow that it was not the object of any human faculty;—just at a time like this, a deep but silent change was imminent.

Let me not be thought unmindful, in saying this, of the merits of the Christian Church, as a depositary and upholder of divine truth. Deep is the debt of gratitude owing to the Church on this score. But at the time I speak of, the Church's influence rested on custom, institution, endowment, long possession of authority, habitual rule over education, and other forces of a similarly external, material, or more strictly a *temporal* as opposed to a *spiritual* kind. It saw no more than did the rest of the world what that divine truth, pure and simple, *was*, of which it was the depositary. Its creeds were in exactly the same predicament as the mythology of *Paradise Lost*. They *were* not the truth, but they contained it, and contained it unsifted and undistinguished. The doctors of the Church were like doctors of medicine who, to make sure of the patient swallowing his potion, should insist on his swallowing the bottle also. What even the Church now needed was, not a dogged insistence that the creeds contained the truth, but a revival of life in the world

and the Church together, enabling individual souls to adopt and assimilate the truth, whether expressed in the old formulas or not. Nor was any other extrication from the dilemma possible. The world *could not* swallow the formulas. But the change was at hand.

It was a change spontaneous, organic, vital. It was a vernal awakening of that very imaginative power by which Milton had introduced the Divine into poetry, and had fixed it as the ineradicable though insoluble kernel of the *Paradise Lost*. He had imagined the Divine as the correlative of the human *conscience*, and the reality of the Divine for thought was guaranteed by the reality of conscience and the reality of its laws. This now became the avenue by which the Divine could be approached by poetry; by poetry not fictive but interpretative of truth. The mind of man in its deeper recesses became, as it were, the mirror in which we might see the Divine reflected, when we had once convinced ourselves that a direct vision was impossible. We might approach and gaze into the mirror, and in doing so make one more advance in the path of subjectivity and introspection. Henceforward the relations of the human mind to God, the mental powers, thoughts, and emotions observable while the mind

entertains and endeavours to realise the idea of God, and the changed aspect of humanity and of nature while it is in that attitude,—these were the topics which were now to take the place of any attempt to realise the Divine directly.

The man who first and most of all wrought this change, or rather in whose mind the change was first wrought, was Wordsworth; and these were the thoughts and feelings which his fervent imagination summoned out of nothingness and clothed with a glorious shape.

The task before him, the task which we now, at the distance of three quarters of a century, can see that he accomplished, which we can now formulate and describe, but which he at that time, and looking forward only, could neither formulate nor describe as a task before him, was this: To ascend from the lower end of the golden chain of revelation, in the heart and mind of man, to its upper end in the Divine Being, and ascertain the upper end by means of the lower. Previously, in the Creeds as in *Paradise Lost*, the upper end had been assumed, and the task had been to descend the chain and ascertain the lower by the supposed knowledge of the upper end. Revelation had meant a miraculously attested message from a well-known Being, whose message but

not whose existence required attestation. But, as we have seen, the *existence* of that Being was now called in question. Wordsworth had to prove that the mind of man *contained a revelation* of that Being's nature and existence.

Wordsworth was singularly endowed for such a mission. His type of imagination was singular. He had no dramatic, no epic gift, and but small lyric power. But he possessed in a pre-eminent degree a meditative and contemplative imagination, which gave him insight into the significance of nature and of man, and enabled him to interpret them to others. "His characters," says Principal Shairp, "are meditative representations, not dramatic exhibitions of men. For these last no poet ever had less gift."\* His poems are full of stanzas, lines, phrases, epithets, cadences, harmonies, which carry home to the heart and understanding the moral value and power of natural scenes or human destinies, their glory or their sadness, and make us see them and feel them as we never could have seen or felt them for ourselves, and thus create out of them, as it were, a new heaven and a new earth, which yet are the old heaven and earth of all of us.

\* *Studies in Poetry and Philosophy*. Preface to second edition, p. xiii.

That is Wordsworth's gift; and, as Mr. Arnold has well insisted in the Preface to those poems which he has chosen and edited for the Golden Treasury Series, there is an ample body of work in which this power is displayed. Which whole ample body of poetry, together with the quality and power of the imagination displayed therein, is that by which the poet's rank and fame must be determined. But with this I have not here to do. My present business is with one point only, how he deals with the real supernatural, and that not with a view of determining whether the passages in which he deals with it are more or less truly poetical than others, but what that dealing in itself is.

For this purpose I pass over a number of poems which contain what I may call the outworks of the subject, passages more or less philosophical in import, such as are to be found, for instance, in the *Lines on revisiting the Wye above Tintern*; in the *Ode to Duty*; in the *Happy Warrior*; in the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*. And I cite a passage in which, if anywhere, his deepest convictions and clearest insight into the nature of God, from the side of man's relation to him, are expressed. I mean the passage in the Fourth Book of *The Excursion* (Despondency Corrected) containing the first half of the

Wanderer's reply to the Solitary, a passage of some 230 lines, from the beginning of the Book down to

“rejoicing secretly  
In the sublime attractions of the grave.”

The opening lines contain the foundation of the whole, lines which, I think, may without impropriety be characterised as a philosopher's creed :

“ One adequate support  
For the calamities of mortal life  
Exists—one only ; an assured belief  
That the procession of our fate, howe'er  
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being  
Of infinite benevolence and power ;  
Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
All accidents, converting them to good.  
—The darts of anguish *fix* not where the seat  
Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified  
By acquiescence in the Will supreme  
For time and for eternity ; by faith,  
Faith absolute in God, including hope,  
And the defence that lies in boundless love  
Of his perfections ; with habitual dread  
Of aught unworthily conceived, endured  
Impatiently, ill-done, or left undone,  
To the dishonour of his holy name.  
Soul of our Souls, and safeguard of the world !  
Sustain, thou only canst, the sick of heart ;  
Restore their languid spirits, and recal  
Their lost affections unto thee and thine !”



Mr. Arnold says, quoting the first eight lines of this passage, in the *Preface* which I have spoken of, that they are “doctrine such as we hear in church too, religious and philosophic doctrine;” but he does not mention, what to my mind makes an enormous difference, that in church the doctrine is announced from a wholly opposite point of view, is announced as coming from what I have called the upper end of the chain of revelation, and not as being discerned in the lower end of it, the mind of man. It is the *re-discovery* of truths like these, by man for himself, which, for us at the present day, is the important circumstance about them. It is their nature to be perpetually re-discovered. They were re-discovered 1880 years ago in Judæa, after centuries of burial. They were then formulated to suit the wants of that and the next generations, and their formulas became their sepulchre. They have now been discovered again. They are the true phoenix. We are now aware of this circumstance; whereby, let us hope, their next re-discovery may be both facilitated and accelerated, and that in the end, their periodic burial being dispensed with, they may become in very deed

“ truths that wake  
To perish never;  
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,

Nor Man nor Boy,  
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
Can utterly abolish or destroy !”

Wordsworth himself even, in my opinion, contributed something to their re-burial, by adopting in some cases the Kantian phraseology, and I suppose to some extent the Kantian philosophy also, as for instance in a later part of the very passage I have cited, where he speaks of

“the measures and the forms  
Which an abstract intelligence supplies,  
Whose kingdom is where time and space are not.”

But I am by no means concerned to defend Wordsworth’s system of philosophy, if he had one ; all I wish to do, and it is all, I think, that can be done profitably, is to point out where he discerns and exhibits those facts in human nature which lead us inevitably to infer a divine guidance. And towards the end of the passage cited there is one such fact noted, and noted as a simple fact of nature, where, speaking of prayer used to strengthen resolve, he calls it

“A stream, which, from the fountain of the heart  
Issuing, however feebly, nowhere flows  
Without access of unexpected strength.”

Or, to take another point from the same passage ; how true and yet recondite is the confession,

“That ’tis a thing impossible to frame  
 Conceptions equal to the soul’s desires;  
 And the most difficult of tasks to *keep*  
 Heights which the soul is competent to gain.”

Of Kant’s three great problems of philosophy, freedom, immortality, and God, freedom is treated incidentally both in the two last-quoted passages, and also partially in the first, inasmuch as the foreknowledge and providence of God stand in close connection with it. And as to immortality, it is important to notice, that Wordsworth in this cardinal passage, though making one brief allusion to the “shadowy recollections” of infancy, suspends the belief in it entirely upon our conception of God and our faith in him :

“Hope, below this, consists not with belief  
 In mercy, carried infinite degrees  
 Beyond the tenderness of human hearts :  
 Hope, below this, consists not with belief  
 In perfect wisdom, guiding mightiest power,  
 That finds no limits but her own pure will.”

And when we ask what, in plain prose, is the outcome of the whole, the answer, I take it, must be something to this effect : Wordsworth shows, that a man *can* believe, is happy if he *does* believe, and finds it more and more credible the more he reflects upon it, that this visible world is part and parcel of

infinity, and that infinity is governed, in ways we cannot comprehend, by a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and benevolence.

Didactic this must be freely admitted to be ; and didactic poetry is certainly not the kind which is most poetical. But if it should be contended not only that this is didactic poetry, but that no didactic poetry, so called, is poetry at all, and therefore that this is sermonising and nothing more, then I enter a decided protest. It is true that metre alone does not constitute poetry, but it contributes much to poetical impression, so that, but for the conciseness and point of the form, the imaginative power of the matter would often be lost. And in this whole passage there is not a word we could wish altered or omitted. It is full of impassioned imagination. And I find that it stands what is perhaps the best practical test of poetry, namely, that it can be read over and over again with increased pleasure, notwithstanding that we know it well in substance. Few sermons, few novels, and indeed but little of any kind of prose literature, will bear this test. We do not want to re-read prose literature, unless we have either quite forgotten it, or unless some necessity requires us to see exactly what it contains. But the pleasure of poetry comes from the composition itself, from the

form and matter together, and to read it again is to have the original pleasure renewed. Even prose, if it stands this test, is poetry. The present passage, then, notwithstanding its didactic purpose, is true poetry; and the same applies to a great deal besides, which Mr. Arnold has, no doubt rightly for his purposes, not taken up into his little volume of selections from Wordsworth.

### III.

WORDSWORTH, who devoted himself to poetry, and trained himself consciously for that end, was the philosophic poet *par excellence* of that brilliant constellation of six,—Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge; Byron, Shelley, Keats,—whom I spoke of in the first paper of this volume, as inaugurating the nineteenth century in this country, and dominating its literary development. A group of what varied powers, and operating to what divergent ends! Scott, the patron saint of chivalry, the conservative poet, the Pindar of the group; Wordsworth the philosophic poet; Coleridge the imaginative philosopher; Byron (at least if judged by what was peculiarly inimitable in him) its comic poet, its Aristophanes; Shelley its poetic

and, so to say, *romantic* Neo-platonist; Keats its romantic artist, a Greek in sensitiveness to physical beauty. It is too early yet to estimate the period, of which this constellation of genius marked the opening, or to trace the results which may be due to its members severally. The period is not yet closed; the influences which inspired it are not yet exhausted.

But one step farther I would take in pursuit of the Divine in English poetry, which is my present theme, and follow it in one more instance, I mean the way in which it is handled by our present Laureate. A difficult and delicate task I feel it, to lay the finger of criticism, to whatever issue, upon works, to the earlier among which I, in common with hundreds of others, owe more as a living formative influence on the mind, than I should find it easy to analyse or describe; so early and so deep was the hold they took upon me, so thankfully were they received, so repeatedly were they pondered. The absence, or comparative absence, of the didactic element made their entrance at once easier and more unobserved; and once in possession of the mind, it seemed as if they had been always there, and were a necessary part of its constitution.

Were it not for some small uncomfortable hitches in an otherwise comfortable theory, such as remem-

bering the circumstances of an actual first reading, or of some critical contention with a friend who happened to be a poetical non-conductor, one might imagine oneself tempted to doubt their real *objective* origin and attribute it to oneself. Suppose one had read, say at 16, *The Miller's Daughter*, and forgotten the actual first reading of it, how easily might one imagine it an innate idea, or ante-natal reminiscence. What but the evidence of the printed book would be against it? For my part, I am always most readily convinced when I remember a certain amicable debate I once had over the line

“The light cloud smoulders on the summer crag.”

My friend, who was acute, maintained that *smoulders* was only applicable to things that were *burnt out*; I on the contrary, that *as poetry* it was only applicable to things that were *not* burnt out, but were analogous thereto. I am sure, if I had been the author of the line, he would have said something disagreeable. As he did not, I am convinced the authorship was different; and then external evidence comes in and connects it with Mr. Tennyson.

But to dally no longer with our task, I would begin by noting the poet's strongly marked individuality and originality. If any man ever created

a new style, it is he; if any man's style was ever the "incarnation" of his thought, his style is so. Observe the stamp which he has set on that metre which he adopted for *In Memoriam*. It is a new instrument in his hands. If any man, again, has variety in treatment of subject, it is Mr. Tennyson. Witness the monologue method in which *Maud* is composed, a poem which is, perhaps, the culmination of his power of uniting Milton's three essentials of poetry, that it should be "simple, sensuous, passionate." Yet how different is it from that other great work, the *Idylls of the King*, and again from the exquisite *Princess*; and how totally different from all is *In Memoriam*, which as an imaginative expression of tenderly devoted friendship has no analogue that I know of, different though they are in other most obvious respects, but the Sonnets of Shakspeare. These poems, as well as several of the minor ones, stand each alone in its kind,—a new thing; whatever their worth besides, be they silver or be they gold, they are each in its kind original, not imitable, *nihil simile aut secundum*.

Then, again, as an artist, how high Mr. Tennyson stands, both in the proportion of parts and mode of presenting the whole subject, and also as a master of versification, its harmonies and its melodies. Nor



do I mean only his *tours de force*, either in “experiments” as he calls them with classical metres, or even in his splendid adaptations of classical metres, as in the *Boadicea*; I mean especially his versification in ordinary metres, such as in that glorious poem from which I am shortly to quote, *The Palace of Art*, or in the limpid smoothness of *The Talking Oak*.

How great again he is as an humourist, in *Will Waterproof*, for instance, and *Walking to the Mail*, and above all in the *Northern Farmer*. Then again how completely he accepts the scientific results of the time, and what is more, the fact of scientific progress. Wordsworth takes his stand frankly on human nature, but Tennyson has, besides, access to later and fuller physical knowledge, and rejoices in its possession. He is full of the idea of new achievement, of man’s capabilities for the future, as well as his acquirements in the past; and, in the case of individuals, the *quid sumus et quid victuri gignimur* is ever present to him. Lastly as a moralist, the ideal which he everywhere holds up, and holds up in the truly poetical way, that is, not didactically but by picture, by dramatic narrative, in idyll, ode, and tender or Tyrtæan song,—the ideal is of the noblest strain; an ideal which, perhaps, can best be characterised by selecting, as distinctive instances, the

Idyll of *Guinevere*, and the noble Fourth (or *Cranmer*) Act of *Queen Mary*. To which I would now add, before this paper goes to press, the two companion pieces, *Sir John Oldcastle*, and *Columbus*, and also the *Voyage of Macdune*, with its lesson of forgiveness and peace, so different from what was intended apparently, though perhaps apparently only, to be practically inculcated in the so-called "war passages" of *Maul*. And now, too, I hail the success of *The Cup*, as a proof that the special art of the dramatist has been acquired by its author, and venture to anticipate therefrom a lasting benefit to the English stage.

Broad outlines these and most imperfect, most inadequate, if taken as in any sense a complete account of the subject of them. But it was necessary to frame some general idea of the poet and his works, in order to set in its true light the passages in which he treats directly of man's relation to the Divine. Directly I say, because the thought is one which is everywhere implied, and which frequently occurs indirectly, especially in the earlier poems, as for instance in *The Two Voices*; *The May Queen*; *St. Simcon Stylites*; *St. Agnes' Eve*; *The Vision of Sin*; and again in his latest poem\* of all, *De Pro-*

\* *I.e.* up to July 1880.

*fundis*. It was necessary to show what we are, and what we are not, to expect from him in the treatment of this subject. We are not to expect disquisition or abstraction; we are to expect concrete pictures, and pleadings that approach the lyrical.

It is from *The Palace of Art* that I shall first cite. In the Prologue to that poem he says :

“I send you here a sort of allegory,  
 (For you will understand it), of a soul,  
 A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,  
 A spacious garden full of flowering weeds,  
 A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,  
 That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen  
 In all varieties of mould and mind)  
 And Knowledge for its beauty ; or if Good,  
 Good only for its beauty, seeing not  
 That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three sisters  
 That doat upon each other, friends to man,  
 Living together under the same roof,  
 And never can be sundered without tears.  
 And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be  
 Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie  
 Howling in outer darkness. Not for this  
 Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,  
 Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears  
 Of angels, to the perfect shape of man.”

That is not the passage I mean; but it is the best introduction to it. The poem then begins, and describes in vivid and beautiful imagery the life of

the soul "that shuts Love out." Then comes the passage in which the relation of man to God is made clear by a singular means, namely, by showing what man is *without* God :

"And so she throve and prosper'd : so three years  
She prosper'd : on the fourth she fell,  
Like Herod, when the shout was in his ears,  
Struck thro' with pangs of Hell.

"Lest she should fail and perish utterly  
God, before whom ever lie bare  
The abysmal deeps of Personality,  
Plagued her with sore despair.

\* \* \*

"A spot of dull stagnation, without light  
Or power of movement, seem'd my soul,  
'Mid onward-sloping motions infinite  
Making for one sure goal.

"A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore ; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.

"A star that with the choral starry dance  
Join'd not, but stood, and standing saw  
The hollow orb of moving Circumstance  
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

"Back on herself her serpent pride had curl'd.  
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone hall,  
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of this world :  
One deep, deep silence all !"

\* \* \*

The passage is too long for full quotation. But I would urge those to whom it may not be familiar to read the whole, indeed the whole poem in its entirety. If it be turned to and read, it needs no comment; if it is not read, comment would be injurious. In fact the Prologue is the comment; and that is why I quoted it at length.

Secondly we come to a passage in *In Memoriam*. That is a poem in which the present subject, the Divine, is also approached from the human side, but this time from the question of life, death, and immortality. Many places of this glorious poem might be cited, but one is sufficient. We are here on ground where the interest comes home to individuals as their own; and consequently where we are no longer to expect mere *pictures*, however true, of things which can be hung on the wall, as it were, in the house of the Interpreter, to be contemplated and so learnt from. We are to expect the *expression*, from within, of "obstinate questionings," of "blank misgivings," of the actual mortal struggle of doubt and faith and its issue. In this light let us read

## CXXIV.

"That which we dare invoke to bless ;  
     Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;  
     He, They, One, All ; within, without ;  
 The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

“I found Him not in world or sun,  
 Or eagle’s wing, or insect’s eye;  
 Nor thro’ the questions men may try,  
 The petty cobwebs we have spun.

“If e’er when faith had fall’n asleep,  
 I heard a voice ‘believe no more,’  
 And heard an ever-breaking shore  
 That tumbled in a Godless deep;

“A warmth within the breast would melt  
 The freezing reason’s colder part,  
 And like a man in wrath the heart  
 Stood up and answered ‘I have felt.’

“No, like a child in doubt and fear :  
 But that blind clamour made me wise ;  
 Then was I as a child that cries,  
 But, crying, knows his father near.

“And what I am beheld again  
 What is, and no man understands ;  
 And out of darkness came the hands  
 That reach thro’ nature, moulding men.”

Two ways of treating the relations of man to God we have now seen ; we have seen the evidence of the emotional life in two ways ; first the despair which comes of proud self-sufficiency, in *The Palace of Art*, and secondly the glad repose which comes of faith, humble because subsisting in spite of the failure of argumentative proof, in *In Memoriam*. And if humility is an essential attribute of faith in God,

if the requirement of argumentative proof before we believe in him is a demand which springs from pride, involving as it does the conception that man's intellect can grasp the divine nature,—then the failure of argumentative proof of the existence of God must be an essential condition of our having faith in him. A God that could be either proved or disproved would be no God, if by the term *God* we mean the object, not of belief merely, but of faith.

Has, then, the intellect nothing to say in this question? Are we limited to the evidence of the emotional life? If the argumentative proof, whether it be the “argument from design” as it is called, or any other mode of logical proof, fails to give us positive intellectual certainty, is that all that the intellect can do for us, and are we consequently left to the evidence of the feelings alone? The idea is frequently entertained that we are. Nothing is more common than to hear it said, that, onwards from the point where knowledge abandons us, pious souls may if they like take their emotions as their guide, but must remember that these can guide them to dreamland only.

But it is evident in the first place, from this very concession, that the intellect has at least the power of proving that *disproof* of the divine is im-

possible. And in the second place, even to dream, beyond the point where knowledge abandons us, to fill that unknown region even with dreams, requires intellect; which therefore has a function of some sort beyond the point of failure of positive proof. What is the real existence beyond that point, since existence there must be; what is the object of faith beyond knowledge; or rather *how can we figure it to ourselves, so as to show its possibility in itself, and its possible relation to ourselves?*

We have seen how Wordsworth figures the objective divine existence, in the passage from *The Excursion*. Let us now see how Tennyson figures it, in a passage which is, it may be said, the objective intellectual completion of the thought in the two passages already quoted from him. The passage which I mean is the whole of that little poem entitled *The Higher Pantheism*:

“The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the  
plains—

Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho’ He be not that which He  
seems?

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in  
dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,  
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?



Dark is the world to thee : thyself art the reason why ;  
 For is He not all but thou, that hast power to feel ‘I  
     am I ?’

Glory about thee, without thee ; and thou fulfillest thy  
     doom

Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and  
     gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with Spirit  
     can meet—

Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and  
     feet.

God is law, say the wise ; O Soul, and let us rejoice,  
 For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some : no God at all, says the fool ;  
 For all we have power to see is a straight staff bent in  
     a pool ;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man  
     cannot see ;

But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not  
     He ?”

“ *A Pantheist then ?*” And in reply I ask, What  
 is Pantheism ? I am glad this word *Pantheism*  
 has been boldly spoken out and adopted by Mr.  
 Tennyson. It is one of those vague bugbears of a  
 phrase which serves to cloak maliciousness, and  
 give an apparent justification to unreasoning anti-  
 pathies. It has three meanings, and rarely if ever do  
 those who disparagingly use it specify in which, or

in what other, sense they intend it to be understood. Sometimes it means *impersonality* of the Divine Being; sometimes *immanence* of the Divine Being in the visible world; and sometimes his immanence in the *infinite universe*. It is in this last sense that I apprehend it to be used in this poem. It is obviously not used in the first sense, and almost as obviously it is not limited to the second. And if taken in the third and last sense, as the immanence of God in the infinite universe, Pantheism is, if I may venture to say so, not only a necessity of religious thought, but Christianity itself is pantheistic; and that very thing is the speculative and logical title of Christianity to everlasting permanence as a form of religion.

But what is Christianity, it will be asked; and what do you intend by that name, almost as ambiguous as Pantheism? True it is ambiguous, notwithstanding that the Christian Church has been engaged for some 1800 years in defining it. It will, however, be enough for my present purpose if I make my meaning clear as to what Christianity is *not*. It is not any dogma or dogmas of the Christian Creed, nor any dogma that stands on the same plane with them, made absolute. And by being made absolute I mean being made necessary as a

symbol of Christian communion. There is a dogma, so to call it, which stands on a higher plane than these, the dogma of the Fatherhood of God, as Jesus Christ understood it ; and that dogma may be made absolute, for it will include all mankind, whatever form of religion they may profess, provided the form professed is not made absolute. There is an universal communion, of which the dogma of the higher plane is the symbol ; and there are narrower communions, one of which is that now called Christian, the symbols of which are dogmas of the lower plane. That men belong to one or other of these narrower communions is matter of race, of education, and other forms of accident and circumstance. That they belong to the vaster communion is matter of the grace of God accepted and held fast by the individual. It is in no wise necessary that, in order to enter into the vaster communion, a man should shake off or cease to believe the dogmas of the narrower communion to which he may happen to belong, whether by birth, or education, or free choice, or any other reason. All that is necessary is, that he should not hold those narrower dogmas as absolute, that is, as excluding others from belonging to the same vast, universal, and spiritual communion with himself. A man may be a Christian both in the

wide and in the narrow, the including and the included, sense. All within that larger circle have one faith, one hope, one purpose.\*

Thus we may apply to all mankind the prophetic words of one of the best and truest teachers of the present age, words which, from the connection in which they were spoken, were intended primarily of the various sections then within the Christian Church :

“Like travellers across a mountain region to a distant city, some have taken as their guides those who seemed authorized to the office, or who set their own claims the highest; some have surrendered themselves to those whom accident first threw before them; some to the most clamorous and boastful; some to those who promised the smoothest and easiest way: others have yielded to the temptation of being conducted by passes known only to the few. But when once the toils of the journey are engaged in, it is for the most part too late to re-examine the credentials and qualifications of their guides, or to endeavour to correct an erroneous selection and choice: in the main, the reaching of their final resting-place will depend on each one’s constancy and perseverance; few will be led so far astray, that their own energy and sense will not enable them to recover a true path; none will be so well-guided, that they can delay without risk, or indulge themselves in seductive halting-places. At last as they approach the city of their rest, the tracks which

\* See NOTE at the end of this Essay, *On the true Symbol of Christian Union.*

seemed so devious and wide asunder are seen to converge, and the wayfarers, emerging from their toils, meet one another, not without surprise, which is soon swallowed up in cordial greeting, at the table of their common Lord."\*

Thus have I endeavoured to trace, in four of our master poets, first the separation of the real supernatural from the fictitious, and then the successive stages of its development. That, when so separated, it should have been made a distinct subject of poetry in the manner I have shown, seems to me something singular and important, something characteristic of modern Europe. I know not whether anything parallel to it can be found elsewhere. I think not in Greek or Roman antiquity. It seems to be one effect of the greater variety of elements which have gone to make up the mental and moral character of modern civilisation, of the fact that several new and fresh nations were brought into contact, from the breaking up of the Roman Empire downwards, with the best results of Greek, Roman, and Hebrew civilisation, and were enabled to enter step by step into that inheritance, while at the same time

\* *The Communion of Saints*: the Bampton Lecture, 1851. By Henry Bristow Wilson, B.D. *Lecture VIII.* p. 276.

new fields were opened for their mental activity in science, invention, and geographical discovery, which again brought within their ken, not only numbers of tribes and nations existing in early or degenerate stages of civilisation, but also the languages, the religions, the literature, and the institutions of races which had reached a high degree of civilisation in antiquity. The recently developed sciences of comparative philology, mythology, and law in the wide sense, are fully comparable, in the importance of their effect on our mental range, to the opening up of Greek antiquity which ushered in the Renaissance.

But this entire development took place, as was remarked above, under the superincumbent pressure of a dogmatic system of belief, extending to all branches of knowledge and speculation, which was accepted as revealed and therefore as absolute truth. True this dogmatic system was in great measure the work of the young and fresh nations which received Christianity, which like everything else was received *ad modum recipientis*, that is to say, as moulded by the receivers' own capacities and dispositions. Thus the northern races, at a low stage of development, made absolute for themselves what I may call the historical miraculous of biblical antiquity, such as

the stories of the creation and the deluge; and those of the south, at a similarly low stage, seized with avidity on angels, saints, and martyrs, and peopled heaven with a whole hierarchy of glorified beings; while, at the same time, they both alike gave a definite and material turn to the central dogmas of the Church, such as the Incarnation, the Atonement, Heaven and Hell, and the Day of Judgment.

At the present day, persons who are enlightened in other respects, but who are subject to the mental obtuseness or myopia which we euphemistically call being "matter-of-fact" people, and who represent, and are as it were survivals of, the lower stage of development just mentioned, are perfectly aware that all such dogmas are fictions. But at the same time, being "matter-of-fact" persons, that is, their mental development having been arrested at a stage representative of an early period of civilisation, they do not perceive the facts which have pushed up from within, have displaced, and occupied the room of the old "matter-of-fact" dogmas, but, denying these, they are either content to leave a blank negation in their stead, or else they try to replace them by some equally "matter-of-fact" invention of their own.

But what are these new facts, which spring from the same root, so to speak, as the old dogmas, displace the dead last year's wood, and send up living shoots in its place? What are these new facts which the "matter-of-fact" people do not see? And who are the people who see them? The foregoing paper is the answer to these questions. The people who see these facts are the imaginative poets; the facts which they see are the facts of the real supernatural, which they describe from the mirror of their own minds. Only by being seen in the mirror of the mind can any facts, can even "matter-of-fact" facts be seen. And the one fatal and fontal blindness, which is the source and parent of every kind of "matter-of-fact" blindness, is this, the inability to see that "matter-of-fact" facts are not absolute but relative, that is, stand in relation to the mirror of the mind, are known only as so mirrored, and are consequently affected by the laws not only of the *constitution* of the mirror, but also by those of its *growth*.

There has been and is still going on, in modern civilisation, a vital organic development. The contemporary minds at any time composing the society, besides standing in relation to one another, stand also in relation to their own past and future, and to



their own ancestors and descendants, the societies which have preceded them and which will follow them. This latter relation is the relation of vital organic development of which I speak. Individuals, however specifically different, belong to one and the same kind, their characters or mental structures are formed on the same generic plan. They may be considered in a rough diagrammatic way as so many *brains*—for I am now speaking of the organic development itself, and not of the question whether the brain is or is not worked by a soul seated within it; I am speaking of the *how*, not of the *by whom* or *by what*. To these brains, then, are brought in, so to speak, all the multifarious acquisitions of knowledge. The work of discovering, appropriating, and communicating these acquisitions goes to increase the power and vitality of the brains themselves. They assimilate and mould the knowledge, arrange it and organise it into systems of science, art, or poetry. For the purpose of naming and describing what we are and where we stand in civilisation, we make use of the knowledges we have acquired, or the works of art we have produced. But neither the acquired knowledges nor the productions of art *are* the vital powers by which they have been produced or acquired. They are not *ourselves*. They serve to explain us to ourselves, like so many

signs, or counters, or names. The actually producing, acquiring, and enjoying them is the vital thing. That is the thing which has determined what they mean for us now, and which will determine what they will mean for us in the future.

It is this vital and organic mental process upon which the great imaginative and philosophic poets have fastened ; it is the movement, the steps, of the process itself which they are describing to us, when they describe the Divine. We can tell when they are inventing and when they are describing. We can distinguish the adventurous voyage into mythology and fairyland from the serious and earnest gaze into the mirror that reflects the world. The poets themselves, too, know well the difference. It was not because he disbelieved but because he believed in the Divine, that Shakspeare abstained from weaving it into his drama. He believed in it too profoundly to admit of mixing it up with the fictitious characters, the invented but "matter-of-fact" circumstances, of plays that represented the real world of men and women. It stood not on their level, and therefore it entered not into his scope. If for him it had become a myth, he would have treated it as he treated the witches and the fairies.

We have seen the effect of its introduction by

Milton, who, profoundly believing in it, endeavoured to image it forth in poetry as he imaged the first created pair, the celestial and the rebel hierarchies. But God cannot be imaged as poetry images, because so to image is to limit ; and this was no doubt one reason of the Mosaic prohibition of images. Milton erred against this fact or law of the mind, and the result was that the strong vital force, which he had imprisoned in his poem, shattered his poetry and remained transcendant.

Then poets approached from another side. Instead of attempting to image God, they took the lowlier course of imaging how man is affected in his presence, the presence of an Infinite Being. Wordsworth laid hold, so to speak, of the force which had shattered Milton's poem, the force of the divine idea as it was *in the mind*, and described that force itself. In this way it admitted of description. And not only of description in the measured and contemplative Wordsworthian language, but also in the rich and glowing imagery of Tennyson, which is proof and confirmation of the true method having been found. For, though poetry is the child of individual genius more than any other offspring of the mind, yet it has its history and its conditions of development. There is a progress in poetry as in every-

thing that belongs to man ; a right course and a wrong to choose between at every moment ; and much to be learnt from the examples of the past. From these the true poet gathers lessons which he embodies in his art ; and his genius, which cannot be learnt, gives him the privilege of deciphering and applying them.

NOTE.

ON THE TRUE SYMBOL OF CHRISTIAN  
UNION.



## ON THE TRUE SYMBOL OF CHRISTIAN UNION.

[Being the NOTE referred to at p. 172.]

THE present critical position of things in our own established Church, and also more or less in all sections of Christendom, will I hope exonerate me from the charge of presumption, if I set down some thoughts which have occurred to me on the above subject, though without any sort of authority or indeed any special claim to be heard. The matter is one of deep public interest, and may well engage the attention of any one, whether he stands within the Christian pale or without. It will moreover be seen that many of the remarks which follow could hardly come from the pen of an ordained minister, at least of the English Church.

It appears to me, then, that there is one thing, and only one, which can save the Christian Church from certain though possibly gradual dissolution, or from decay more fatal still, and that is the recognition and actual adoption in practice of the true out-

ward bond of Christian union, I mean the symbol by which members of the society are known and recognised as such. I speak of the outward bond or symbol only, for if the inward bond which knits Christians together needed renewal, the case would be beyond remedy.

The true outward bond or symbol of Christian membership is not of an intellectual but of a practical character. It is not a common creed, but a common allegiance. It is not a belief about Christ, but a profession of obedience to him. The question decisive of membership is not—Do you believe that Jesus Christ is God? or Do you believe that Jesus Christ rose from the dead? but—Do you accept Jesus Christ as your master and your pattern?

No Church comprehension based on the principle of minimising the creed will be of the slightest avail, so long as the principle of having a creed at all as the symbol of union is retained. You may strike out the resurrection, the incarnation, the atonement; you may strike out the miraculous altogether; and yet you will have done nothing but fall back on a Theism, more or less pure, and will have simply de-Christianised the Church, instead of extending it. Instead of a *religion* you will then have, or at any rate be in danger of having, only a *philosophy*. Miser-



able exchange. It is not enough to believe in God in the abstract, or as He may be represented by philosophy. Christians differ from Theists by believing in that God in whom Jesus Christ believed, and whom, by his own belief, he revealed to others.

To believe in Christ is, not to believe that he is God, but that he has the words of eternal life. The first disciples were bound to him and to one another by this belief. That is the bond of union still. A disciple is one who has the same feelings towards God and towards men as the Master has, the same duties for the present world, the same hopes for eternity. To realise this, we must go back to that time in the history of the primitive church when it was confounded and scattered by the event of the Crucifixion. We must liken ourselves to those who said, "We trusted that it had been he, which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done;"—that is, *before* the belief in the Resurrection had arisen in the church. Do we still believe in Jesus Christ; do we still acknowledge that he has the words of eternal life; do we share his love and obedience towards God, his charity towards men, his duties for the present world, his hopes for eternity; and that, whether he rose from the dead the third day or not?

If we do, then there is no hindrance to our adopting the principle of professed allegiance to Jesus Christ as the true symbol of Christian membership. And also we can comprehend in that membership, so far as we are concerned, those who add to their allegiance a belief either in the resurrection, or the incarnation, or any other articles of the ancient creed. The condition of membership is shifted from the profession of a belief to a profession of obedience and discipleship. The centre of union remains, as before, Christ himself; the attitude of the members towards him is changed, and changed in such a way as both to enlarge their numbers and increase their sincerity. While at the same time those who adopt the new symbol are relieved from the painful and often dubious task of negative criticism directed against tenets which may be, and often are, the very life-blood of a brother's faith. For the moment when such tenets cease to be regarded as the symbols of union, the moment they cease to exclude from membership those who do not and cannot believe them, that same moment all motive for attacking them ceases likewise. Why should A object to B's believing in the incarnation or the resurrection, when B no longer denies A the name of Christian for disbelieving it? He will rather rejoice that B

should still be able to support himself on beliefs, of which he believes himself with sorrow to have seen the hollowness.

The idea that the true symbol of Christian union is a profession of allegiance to Christ, irrespective of creed, properly so called, is nothing more than a development of the conclusion reached by Mr. H. B. Wilson in his Bampton Lectures on *The Communion of Saints*, from which I quoted in the foregoing Essay. He has himself developed it in another direction, namely, the applicability in practice of the principle which he advocates. His conclusion is this, to take one passage among several :

“And much more than in any other imaginary or real association, are we justified in considering the moral purpose which Christians have manifested, as the essential bond of their union ; that moral purpose being, that men should be conformed to the image of Christ ; that they should work together with Him, in that portion of His work which admits of it, namely, in counteracting the power of sin over the human race. ‘For this cause was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.’ ”\*

If that moral purpose is the “essential bond,” then I argue, that the profession of it, which is the profession of allegiance to Christ, will naturally be

\* *The Communion of Saints*, Lect. VIII. p. 252.

the outward bond, or symbol of it. And it is obvious that there is nothing in these ideas which impugns either the possibility or the fact of miracles. It is possible to be a firm believer in the creed, and yet hold that a belief in it is not to be required as a condition of church-membership.

To put the nature of Mr. Wilson's view in a still clearer light, it may be well to contrast it with the view of the Church and Religion given by another great and honoured teacher, writing some ten years earlier, Arnold of Rugby, in his *Fragment on the Church*. Having distinguished the religion from the church of Christ, he proceeds :

“ By Christian religion I mean that knowledge of God and of Christ, and that communion of the Holy Spirit, by which an individual is led through life in all holiness, and dies with the confident hope of rising again through Christ at the last day.

\*                      \*                      \*

“ But, by the Christian Church, I mean that provision for the communicating, maintaining, and enforcing of this knowledge by which it was to be made influential, not on individuals, but on masses of men.

\*                      \*                      \*

“ Christianity, then, contains on the one hand a divine philosophy, which we may call its religion, and a divine polity, which is its Church.”\*

\* Arnold. *Fragment on the Church*, p. 3-5, second edition.

The conceptions of both teachers agree in regarding the Church as defined and held together by its religion; but they differ in this, that, whereas Arnold *separates* the two by making the church subsidiary to the religion, Mr. Wilson simply *distinguishes* the two, by identifying the religion with the moral purpose of the church. The religion is, with him, the church's life, the vital action of the society, the purpose which animates it from within, and not merely a something, not itself, which it was instituted to achieve or to promote. Hence Mr. Wilson's definition of the church and his definition of the religion essentially coincide. They are two aspects of the same thing. The same "moral purpose" defines them both at once. But Arnold, after defining the church, has still to look for a definition of the religion; which he cannot take from the moral action of the church, because the purpose of promoting the religion is the very thing by which the church has previously been defined.

Mr. Wilson's exact philosophical method saves him from confusing the practical moral purpose, which is the religion, of the church, with any speculative theories or ideas in which it may at any time, or from time to time, have been clothed. He distinguishes, without separating, the actors from their

action. Arnold, who has no such sure guide, mixes up the speculative with the practical elements in his definition of the religion. Christianity contains, he says, "a divine philosophy, which we may call its religion," as well as "a divine polity which is its Church." He distinguishes church from religion, but does not go the length of distinguishing religion from philosophy.

This brings me to notice in the next place a point of the utmost importance to the new symbol of Christian union. The new symbol enables us to recognise how vital the difference is between religion and philosophy, between the moral and the speculative elements in the body of Christian thought; enables us in consequence to exclude what is philosophical and speculative from being reckoned essential conditions of membership.

No doubt a speculative creed began to be formed by the Christian community immediately after the death of our Lord upon the cross. And the first article, or at any rate the most fundamental, was the Resurrection. Without that it is difficult to imagine that the infant community could ever have held together, still less that it could have increased and prospered. Recovering breath, as it were, and returning again to their firm faith in Jesus, their

belief that he had the words of eternal life, notwithstanding his death and burial,—to them, at that moment, and in that age and country, his resurrection would seem the very form and mode in which the possession of the words of eternal life would naturally be manifested. “*Ought not* Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his glory?” The resurrection (supplemented afterwards by the ascension) was the proof that he *had* entered into his glory, that he *was* in the fruition of eternal life. It appeared to them as a fact of sight, which was the proof of everything else, though in reality it was the result of their faith, not the reason for it.

Other articles followed in due course, until that whole system was framed which we know as the Apostles’ Creed. There were the Judaizers and the Gnostics to be met and combated, as the Bishop of Durham has pointed out in the Introduction to his edition of the Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon. St. Paul’s other Epistles had no doubt a similar origin, that is to say, their purpose was to answer intellectual as well as moral and practical questions, and thus to build up a body of doctrine at once explanatory to friends and tenable against foes. The same may be said of the great Epistle to the Hebrews in the second place, and also thirdly,

as I apprehend, of that unrivalled strain of severe yet often tender and impassioned thought, known to us as St. John's Gospel.\* It was compulsory on those who in that age believed that Jesus had the words of eternal life, to throw that belief into a speculative form, not only in order to meet the onslaught of rival speculations, but to give shape and consistency to the belief, I should rather say the *faith*, in Christ, in the disciple's own mind. The resurrection was the first product of this necessity.

Read by this light, the articles of the creed are to us evidence, not of their own vitality, but of the force and vitality of that faith in Christ out of which they sprang. That faith framed them, partly consciously and partly unconsciously, out of the ideas of the time, to meet both internal questionings and rival systems framed of similar materials. They are in no wise articles of the *faith*, however necessary they may have been as bulwarks of it. They are *theories*, one and all; theories made by the church; made out of the intellectual materials at its com-

\* There is no piece of writing that I know of, either in the Bible or in European literature, to equal it. Unless it be the Book of Job. And these two stand to each other as riddle and answer. Once dismiss the theory which makes of it a piece of magic, and its matchless depth and beauty stand revealed in their true nature.



mand, to meet the wants of those days and of many days which were then yet to come. The resurrection is a theory; the incarnation is a theory; and so on of the rest. To hold all these theories distinguished the Christian from the non-Christian in those days, and several of the later ones were, I apprehend, especially devised in order to do so. But they are not the religion. The religion was that faith in Jesus Christ, that joyful confidence in him, which gave them birth, and which will survive them, ready if need be to create others, to meet new forms of hostility in speculative shape. The times, however, change and pass, new knowledge produces new opinions, and it is not likely that Christianity will ever again be called upon to invest itself in the plate-armour of a cosmology. At the same time, if there are persons to whom these articles of the ancient creed are dear, or persons to whom they are necessary, persons who either rejoice to believe in them, or desire to do so, there is no shadow of a reason why they should not. No fellow Christian will rob them of their belief. But let not them in their turn rob others, less fortunate than they, of the thought, that, behind and if need be in place of these, is a rock upon which hope may build, the rock of faith upon which these beliefs themselves were founded.

There is one point in particular which makes the articles of the creed especially unsuitable for a symbol of union at the present day. Owing to the conditions under which they were produced, they are built upon the supernatural in that false sense of the word which has been noticed in the foregoing Essay, the *miraculous* supernatural, as distinguished from the true supernatural, meaning an *unseen world* bound up, though unseen, with the present seen world in one and the same order and dominion of Nature, which is the dominion of God. To accept these articles of the creed in the sense in which they were first formulated is therefore to accept the false and unphilosophical notion of the supernatural, the untenable conception of a divine interference with the order of nature.

But to accept them as the essential symbol of Christian communion is to do far more and far worse. It is to place the Christian community as a whole at variance with the ruling intellectual ideas of the present age; a proceeding not only extremely impolitic and even fatal, but also directly opposed to the practice of those who framed the creed; for it was framed in accordance with the ideas of its own age, and partly at any rate to meet and repel antagonist theories framed out of the same general fund of ideas. The

true antagonists of Christianity are not the ruling ideas of this or any other age, but other systems of belief and of practice, other communions or societies built upon non-Christian principles, and claiming to supersede Christianity. To adopt an ancient creed as the symbol of communion is to court defeat at the hands of contemporary rivals, whose systems are drawn from the modern fund of ideas. It is like having to defend a fortress of the eleventh century against artillery of the nineteenth.

I am here on ground recently trodden by the highest authority in the Church of England, our present justly revered Archbishop of Canterbury, in his Charge delivered at Ashford.\* He there says :

"The Gospel, therefore, with the supernatural" [meaning the miraculous] "element eliminated, has ceased to be the Gospel ; it may be a philosophy with more or less claim to a preference over other human systems ; but it is not that which the Apostles received from the Lord and handed down from Him to be the guide of all nations."†

These are two of the very points against which my foregoing argument has been directed. In the first place I have tried to show, that the Gospel *with*

\* Republished as Chapter iv. of *The Church of the Future*. Macmillan, 1880.

† Work cited, p. 98.

the miraculous element is a philosophy, *without* it a religion; whereas the Archbishop holds the very reverse, namely, that *without* the miraculous the Gospel is a philosophy, and only *with* it is a religion. And secondly my argument has been, that the principal articles of the creed, or say rather those relating to the person of Christ and the Triune nature of God,\*

\* The Triune nature of God is an idea which has its root in human nature itself; it is a direct and immediate consequence of the anthropomorphism which attaches to *all* knowledge. We conceive of God as an Infinite Spirit, and by that sole act, without going farther, we conceive Him as similar to ourselves, that is, as having a *human* as well as a *divine* aspect. That in Him which is in communion with us is then called the Second Person, or aspect, of the Trinity; and the union of these two aspects is the Third. These facts in human nature, that is, in the intimate mechanism of human thought, made it inevitable (as now, after the event, we can see) that the doctrine of the Trinity should be framed, its framers being men who were filled with a deep, pure, and intimately spiritual religion. *That* was the first condition; the mechanism of the human mind did the rest. In the Trinity so conceived, it will be observed, the Third Person is a Bond of union not only between the two natures *in God*, but also between the same two natures in God on one side, and in Men on the other. This is an account of what is eternally *true* in the doctrine of the Trinity. It rests on the idea of God being a *Spirit*. Which a metaphysician would call an *Ideal*.

The empirical way of looking at the doctrine, on the other hand, which may be called the idolatrous way also, consists in conceiving of God as a great Being in some remote place, or of some different kind, from the inhabitants of earth, and then in imagining a communication taking place, effected by God's detaching first the Second Person, and then the Third, from his triplicity, and sending them down to men, with miracles as their credentials. I hold those to be men of sound good sense who

were not "received from the Lord," but arose spontaneously and were developed gradually in the minds of the disciples.

Again the Archbishop says farther on :

"I am aware that some of our antagonists try to draw a line between the supernatural and the miraculous, but the manifestation of the supernatural is a miracle; and what I have been contending for is this—that the whole of Christianity is built upon a manifestation of the supernatural. We need not enter here on Bishop Butler's suggestion that what we call miracles may be not any stopping of the laws of nature, but the manifestation of some higher order of nature, which has its own higher laws, capable of intervening at the times and under the circumstances which God has fixed for their appearance. I must refer the candid student to Bishop Butler's treatment of the subject."\*

Neither do I, any more than the Archbishop, feel called upon to discuss this question. For it is the very gist of my present argument, that the deci-

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refuse to believe, and still more if they positively deny, that there is such a Being as this.

But if they or others go farther, and deny that we have evidence for the existence of God in the sense of an Infinite Spirit, who is the *reality* of that triune idea described above,—then, I think, they are fatally misreading the plain facts of human nature, by mistaking an essential mode of the mind's working for a mere piece of mythologic fiction. The *mind* is the only mirror in which the evidence of God's existence can be read; and into that mirror they, for the most part, hardly condescend to look.

\* *Ibid.* p. 104-5.

sion of such questions, yes or no, is *not* an essential condition of Christian membership. It lies within the scope of the Archbishop's argument, and therefore he (very properly) brings in Bishop Butler to supplement what his limits forbid him to discuss at length. But it lies beyond the scope of mine; for the possibility of what I call the true supernatural intervening in the course of nature, manifesting itself in miracles, as the Archbishop puts it, is and cannot help being a philosophical question, and as such ought not to be made an obligatory part of a religious creed.

Still I will make two closely connected remarks on this conception, and the first is this, that it is really a surrender of the "miraculous" as distinguished from the "true" supernatural, inasmuch as it subsumes the first under the second, by representing miracles as the effect of laws of nature of a higher order. And the second remark is, that, in consequence of this, it leaves the particular events designated as miracles, apart from the question of their miraculous character, to stand or fall according to the evidence producible for each of them; which is the very place I am contending they ought to hold in Christian thought, without being made into indispensable objects of belief. Bishop Butler's con-

ception cuts both ways; it is an aid to "faith" on one side, but it is an appeal to "reason" on the other. It supplies a theory by which we may more readily conceive the possibility of the events designated as miracles, but in doing so, and to the extent that we adopt the theory, it places the belief or disbelief of those events on grounds of evidence, like any other events in history, by conceiving them as subordinate to *law*. The simple acceptance of them on authority, without question asked, is given up.

Observe moreover that, this question having been once definitely raised, as the Archbishop's Charge shows that it has, to make a belief in the miraculous an obligatory condition of Church membership is really to add a *new* article to the creed, and one which determines the sense of all the rest. For though it is true that the Church from the very earliest times not only believed in the miraculous, but made the miraculous an essential and distinctive part of its creed, yet this was not the miraculous as distinguished from the supernatural in the true sense (as I have called it) of the *unseen world* alone, and apart from the question whether it is a miraculously intervening world or not. The question of a *distinction* between the true and the miraculously intervening supernatural had not then been raised.



The supernatural and the miraculous were then looked upon as one and the same thing. And it is one of the circumstances in which the expansiveness, and comprehensiveness, and therefore also the vitality of the religion consists, that it can keep the kernel and reject the shell of a doctrine, when the fruit as a whole has once reached that point of maturity at which shell and kernel are clearly distinguished from each other.

Unless the Church ceases to require an intellectual creed as the symbol of membership, it will find that the question proposed to every individual who reflects on religious matters is, not whether he is prepared to become a disciple of Christ, but whether he is prepared to accept the doctrine of the miraculous. This will make the Church a philosophical instead of a religious society. Philosophy will be the staple of the creed, and religion its adjunct, instead of the reverse as heretofore. There will then be no room within the Church for those who deny the miraculous. But there will always be room in it for those who affirm the miraculous, if the new symbol is adopted. For its principle is, that belief of all kinds, and of all stages of maturity, philosophical and non-philosophical, are embraced and included in the Christian religion, provided they are not in conflict



with fidelity to Jesus Christ. Learned and unlearned alike, the clever and the dull, the simple and the acute,—all may meet as brothers, on this common ground, where none is afore or after other, but where all may rejoice to lay aside these trivial distinctions of earthly vanity, and rise into the clearer and purer atmosphere of love and service to their common Master, and to Almighty God, his Father and ours.

And at the same time that the old foundation fails, another is offered. The conception of the *true* supernatural, the unseen world beyond and embracing the seen world, a conception which is completely in harmony with the ideas of the present age, is not only left open to, but is even held for, religion by philosophy. Its existence is no dream, but is confirmed and defined by philosophical analysis of the very structure and laws of thought. In other words, the basis of the conception is laid in human nature, and is common to all mankind. Religion is not, by accepting it, receiving its basis at the hands of philosophy; it receives it from human nature itself, as a conception which religion and philosophy are equally concerned to defend. It is therefore *common* ground to philosophy and to religion, not a conception rejected by one and embraced by the other, as the false supernatural is. On that common ground

philosophy and religion may meet without antagonism.

Just as a *revealed philosophy* is a contradiction in terms, so also is a *non-revealed religion*. The ideas of philosophy must be laboriously sought, those of religion arise spontaneously. The great object of religion, God the father of the spirits of all flesh, is revealed to the mental eye in a way analogous to that in which the sun in heaven is revealed to the bodily eye. His existence cannot be proved by inference, but must be immediately perceived. What can be done is to coach the mental eye to perceive it. This is the office of religious teachers in all times; it was especially that of the Hebrew prophets, and of Jesus Christ the last and greatest of them; and the chief means he employed was his own example. In this sense it is that he revealed God.

If Christ were visibly present here to-day, and we earnestly questioned him, think you that he would say, *Worship me as God?* Surely he would not. It was not this that he came to reveal.

If it were this that he came to reveal, then he would have come to reveal a creed as well as a religion; and if so, then not only his first disciples would have been right, but his present disciples

would be right now, in making a creed the symbol of membership in the Christian society. No other course would be open to them. But that could not prevent the inevitable disruption. Philosophy and religion, which are natural disparates though also natural allies, would from the first have been bound together in attempted identity, and the church would have been founded not on a rock but on a volcano.

I return, then, to the point from which I set out; the true symbol of Christian membership is allegiance and discipleship, not belief of a creed. You cannot take a creed as your symbol without founding the church on what is in its nature uncertain and depending on inference, instead of on what is self-evident; and it is just because the resurrection appeared self-evident to the first disciples that they made it the basis of their symbol. And be it remembered that the adoption of the new symbol, in place of the old, in no way forbids the belief in the creed, but simply admits to membership some of those who do not believe it.

It is those who believe in the miraculous and in the creed whom the doctrine now set forth chiefly concerns. It is to their attention that I would especially commend it. It is in their power to adopt and act upon it, not in theirs whom the present

symbol excludes. And they can adopt it without changing one jot of their present beliefs. It does not require them to give up the miraculous, but only to give up making it the basis of union, for which purpose it is demonstrably unfit.

Yet, in another direction, the magnitude and vital character of the proposed change must not be dissimulated. It may be hoped that the vigour and energy and purity of the faith will be renewed thereby. But let no one suppose that the church will be a society of the same character after it as before.

Christ will still be the Head, the Bond of union, the beloved Lord and Master of the society, but that Head and Bond and Lord will not be as heretofore divine. The church will be at unity within itself; "I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas" will be heard no more; but it will no longer sit with princes and on the high places of the earth. For it will have become a *spiritual* society, ceasing (so far as any human organisation can) to be a *temporal* one, in ceasing to appeal by its authority and by its creed to the *superstition* of men, that is to say, to the belief as to the past, and expectation as to the future, of the visible and palpable marvellous, which is so dear in all ages to the great mass of mankind. It will permit such beliefs, but it will no longer encour-

age them. Its faith will no longer be an authoritative list of quasi-philosophical doctrines, but, like Christ's, a humble but assured confidence in the Maker and Ruler of the Universe.

"Eternity, be thou  
My refuge,"

will be its watchword.

In short it will have gone back to its first principles; it will be a renewed, perhaps a vigorous society, and with fair hopes of embracing ultimately all mankind; the great *natural* obstacles to which, as distinguished from obstacles which (like creeds) are self-made, consist not so much in the tendency to yield to known temptations, or to act against light and knowledge, which is properly called *sin*, though that is of the utmost gravity, as in the wide and deeply marked diversities of type in men's innate dispositions and characters. But whatever may be the difficulties before the Church, and whatever its hopes of overcoming them, it will frankly have gone back to its first principles, will have renounced the worldly elements on which it has hitherto leaned, and will have to begin the world anew.



ENGLISH VERSE.





## ENGLISH VERSE.

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### I.

CRITICS of poetry are often much at sea with regard to the principles of the art, the productions of which they criticise, and consequently with regard to the logic proper to be applied to it. Thus we often find questions as to the degree of freedom from rules to be accorded to poets,—questions as to how far they are bound by previous practice, how far they may go in initiating changes of their own,—stated in such a way as to admit of no other answer but one dictated by the personal taste of the critic for the time being, however great may be the array of learning and acuteness ranged in support of the critic's view of what previous practice has been.

I will take an instance from a work which is deservedly of the very highest authority in these respects, one besides to which I am most largely indebted for the facts which I am about to use in the present Essay,—Dr. Guest's invaluable *History of*

*English Rhythms*.<sup>\*</sup> There we find the following criticism of Milton. Referring to the lines,

“Death his dart

Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked,”

as an instance of a “period ending immediately after the first syllable of the verse,” by the pause introduced after *shook*, he proceeds :

“If it be said, that such sudden and abrupt termination of the sentence often suits the subject, and is strikingly beautiful—the beauty will be acknowledged, but it is a beauty beyond the reach of Milton’s metre, a beauty therefore which he had no right to meddle with. Versification ceases to be a science, if its laws may be thus lightly broken.”†

Here we have versification conceived as a science having determinate laws which poets are bound to obey, notwithstanding that they may obtain confessedly beautiful effects by infringing them ; and poetry is thus subordinated to verse, instead of verse to poetry. Do then the laws of verse *forbid* the attainment of poetic beauty ? Or if we should indignantly reject such laws of verse as forbid beauty,

<sup>\*</sup> *The History of English Rhythms*, by Edwin Guest, M.A. Pickering, London. 2 vols. 8vo, 1838.—The above remarks were written previous to Dr. Guest’s lamented death. Let me now be permitted to pay my humble tribute of respect and gratitude to the illustrious scholar.

† Work cited, vol. ii. p. 244, compared with the reference there given to vol. i. p. 159.

and condemn them to be honoured rather in the breach than the observance,—then what are the laws of verse, or are there any, which poets are bound to honour by the observance and not by the breach? What is the true freedom of poets, and how is it to be distinguished from license?

The truth in this matter can only be seen by taking a wider purview and range than is usually attempted by critics. We must ask what sort of thing poetry is, what class of phenomena it belongs to, and what is the logic proper to it as a member of that class. Then it will be seen that the conception of laws or rules of art, and of a license accorded to genius to dispense with them, is here entirely out of place. That is not the kind of logic to apply to poetry, and consequently not to versification which is among its means and instruments.

Poetry is a part of human voluntary effort or operation, and like the rest is defined by its end or purpose; for in all these cases the end aimed at by the thing defined, and the generative or efficient principle which constitutes it, coincide. The theory of poetry must follow the nature of poetry, and adopt the definition determined thereby; and therefore must be treated as a branch of *practical* science. Not so with the various branches of physical science.

There we cannot proceed in the same way, because we do not know what the ends aimed at by nature are. There the efficient and the final causes cannot be known to coincide ; we cannot say, such and such is nature's goal, and then proceed to ask by what means she reaches it. We see efficient causes only ; and that they tend to a goal at all is rather matter of *a priori* speculation than of observation or induction.

The logic, therefore, which is properly applicable to poetry, so far from consisting of the conceptions of *laws* and *license*, consists of those of *end* and *means* ; and *means* again breaks up into parts, (1) the material, or subject-matter, in and of which poetry consists, namely, articulate language, and (2) the conditions, belonging to articulate language, which either enable, or hinder, or assist, poetry in attaining her end. End, subject-matter, and conditions, such are the logical conceptions in accordance with which the theory of poetry must be treated.

In framing a working theory to begin with, we need not attend to the conditions ; the end proposed, limited by the subject-matter, will be sufficient. In this view the following definition may be found practically serviceable : *Poetry is the expression of thought*

and feeling by language in such a way as to give imaginative pleasure. The word *language* distinguishes poetry from music, the sounds of which are not articulate;\* and by the omission of *metre*, which is a condition but not an indispensable one, prose becomes in certain cases admissible into poetry, as indisputably it not unfrequently is.

It is the glory of poetry, that, being based upon what is lowest and commonest, it attains what is highest and noblest; based, I mean, upon the universal gift of language, so that it is accessible to all mankind, without requiring any special faculty or training, it attains to the expression and exhibition of the noblest and subtlest emotion and of the largest and truest thought. Of all the fine arts, poetry alone walks in the broad main highway of human aspiration and development. The others, music, painting, sculpture, architecture, stand upon some one or more special and singular faculty, gifts of eye, or ear, or interpretation of sight, touch, and muscular sensibility; and though all of these issue as it were in poetry, and have the same purposed end, namely, the production of imaginative pleasure, yet in the special sense of the term *poetry*, in which it

\* Coleridge. *Literary Remains*, vol. i. p. 219. The whole of Lect. XIII. deserves repeated perusal.

means, not imaginative power or imaginative pleasure, but the *art* by which that pleasure is attained, they are broadly distinguished from it, and occupy a less catholic position. Poetry is distinguished from painting by appealing immediately to the mental eye, not mediately through the eye of sense; and from music, first, by appealing to thought as well as feeling, and secondly by consisting of sounds none of which are wholly musical, since the consonantal sounds, which are necessary in language to the articulation of the vowels, furnish an ever-present non-musical element.

Looking again at that side of poetry on which it includes or may include prose composition, we see that, on the one hand, metre is not necessary to poetry, while poetry is always necessary to metre, being the purpose which governs it. In considering metre we can never wholly abstract from the poetical purpose which it serves; it looks to an end beyond itself. Even in the earliest verse, it is probable that æsthetic pleasure was as much the guiding motive in making it, as its *use* in retaining, recalling, and communicating thought; and that the pleasure was from the first as inseparable from the use, as in dress, to take a parallel instance, purposes of ornament or concealment were inseparable from purposes

of protection. On the other hand, prose, when it rises into poetry, becomes as nearly musical as language without metre can be ; it becomes rhythmical. Rhythm is common ground to verse and prose ; metre distinguishes them. Metre enables a further glory to be added to the most rhythmical prose poetry, but then it must be metre in the hands of a master. The border line is touched and made evident when we compare such prose as this :

“Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?”

with the illuminating gleam diffused over those rivers by one imaginative touch of Milton’s :

“Of Abana and Pharphar, lucid streams.”

We have, then, in verse three steps or stages, related to each other as means to ends, language, metre, poetry. The properties of language are conditions to which metre must conform, and which it has to make the most of. Those of metre perform precisely the same office for poetry. The character of the pronunciation in the ordinary speech of any people is what mainly determines the character of its metres ; and the character of its metres that of

its poetry, so far as its clothing of sounds is concerned. Conversely, it is the character, or as it is called the genius of a people, which, contributing largely to mould all three, is the unifying bond and connection between them. In English, as we shall presently see, we have three different kinds of *stress*, each belonging to one of these stages; the word-stress, which falls upon a syllable or syllables of words; the metrical stress, which falls upon syllables which either have or may receive a word-stress, when the metre requires it; and the emphasis or rhetorical stress, which is superadded to the metrical, and employs it freely as a co-operating instrument in the production of poetical expression.

In distinguishing these three kinds of stress, I am, I believe, at one with Dr. Abbott,\* and unable to agree with his critic, Professor Mayor,† who does not see his way to the distinction between the two first kinds of stress, but only between stress generally, or *accent* as they both call it, and emphasis. For instance in Shelley's line,

“O, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,”

\* See *English Lessons for English People*, by Messrs. E. A. Abbott and J. R. Seeley, p. 152-3.

† *Dr. Guest and Dr. Abbott on English Metre*. Transactions of the Philological Society, 1873-4, p. 637.



he thinks that, since the metrical stress ought to fall on the word *the* and does not, there being no stress on that word at all, metrical stress is a fiction. This is like denying the existence of a component force in a resultant, because it does not for itself *appear* in the resultant. If metrical stress did not exist, where would be *the verse itself*, which Shelley's distribution of emphasis so beautifully moulds, overriding and employing the *ictus*? There are, to my ear, three strongly emphatic syllables :

O, wéep for Adonáis!—The quick Dréams.

Nor can I think for a moment, with Professor Mayor, that the unimportant *the* “is intentionally prefixed to the important word *quick* to give it additional emphasis.”

All language is a creation of human effort and volition; but there are certain physical conditions upon which that creation depends, namely, the character and range of the sounds, breathings, pauses, &c., which the human voice can utter, or can utter most readily. These sounds, along with the peculiarities which they derive from nature, we employ for a purpose, the purpose, namely, of fixing, recalling, moulding, and interchanging thought and feeling. That is the first stage in the volitional pro-

cess which ends in poetry. Language so formed then becomes the material, in and out of which *metre* is framed. That is a second effort of volition. Whether metre and language were formed concurrently, or language first and metre afterwards, it is at any rate convenient logically to consider language as the first, because we can more readily abstract from metre in considering language, than from language in considering metre. The peculiarities of pronunciation imposed by nature are more completely beyond our power to alter than are even the forms of articulate language, and far more than the forms of metrical language. An involuntary, not chosen but imposed set of conditions, then, more or less modifiable, is the standing ground or point of departure for volition at three several stages. First when we make language out of unformed vocal utterances; secondly when we make metre out of language; thirdly when we make poetry out of metre. And at every stage we have to ask, when we go back in thought over the whole process,—at every one of these three stages we have to ask,—what were the conditions which human volition *found*, and what were the changes which it *made*, in the material of sounds with which it dealt.

And now, standing, as it were, on the level top

of the third and highest of the three stages which have been described, the broad table-land of poetry, we can discern a neighbouring height of somewhat lower elevation, rising from the same basis of language, but separated from us by a cleft or gully in the second stage, I mean the difference between metrical and non-metrical composition. Those lower heights are the field of prose literature. I represent them as *lower*, because prose literature is not so wholly free to seek imaginative pleasure as poetry in the stricter sense is ; its beauties of composition, its rhetoric, its rhythm, in one word the pleasure at which it aims, are all subordinate to some *use* which is its first and principal purpose. It stands to poetry somewhat as architecture stands to the other fine arts. Useful purposes must first be served ; and then beauty and æsthetic enjoyment may lawfully be combined with the satisfaction of them.

But the purposes of prose and metrical literature are too nearly the same, and the conditions which determine and limit them are too closely allied, to permit the separation of their theories. They are two branches of one and the same theory, the theory of literature in general, a theory which is in turn a branch of the larger theory of language, and rises out of the latter at the point where language begins

to be consciously employed for the purpose (conceived *eo nomine* or in general terms) of expressing thought and feeling, and having that conscious employment for its subject-matter. In other words, that general theory of literature, which springs out of philology, and has both prose and verse for its objects, each forming a distinct branch, is that to which, owing to the inadequate way in which it is usually conceived, the name of *criticism* or *literary criticism* is applied. Its true name is the *Theory of Style*. The mode of handling language for a purpose, whatever the purpose may be, under whatever conditions of time, place, or circumstances, and whatever the natural characteristics of the language handled,—this it is which is known as *style*, and precisely this is the subject-matter of the theory in question.

Some may perhaps be surprised to find poetry classed as a branch of the theory of Style, and Style as a branch of Philology, or the theory of Language. But this admits of a very simple explanation. If we approach poetry from the technical side, or as an art with a given and fixed end, what we then have to consider is the matter in which it works, and the conditions imposed by the matter. Poetry is then subordinate to style, and style to language, as I have just represented. But if we approach poetry from

the psychological side, which after all is the more comprehensive one, and ask what mental powers are employed and appealed to by poets, we find ourselves launched at once upon the question, what moral, æsthetic, or intellectual effect they aim at producing, what is the end or final cause of their procedure. This end governs both their style and their language; and though poetry is subordinate to style and language as its means, they in turn are subordinate to poetry as one of their ends, while poetry itself is subordinate to no other end but its own.

It is the same with all the other fine arts. The emotional and imaginative effects at which they aim are poetry, just as much as poetry in language is. But considered as *arts* we must consider them from the point of view of their material, their means, and their instruments. We must consider the painter as a worker in colours, the sculptor as a worker in bronze or marble, and so on. Versification belongs to the technical side of poetry, and therefore, when we consider the poet as a verse-maker, notwithstanding that his aim is imaginative and emotional, or in one word poetical, pleasure, we consider him as working in a special material, and his art as subordinated to the general laws of style and of language.

Language, style, and poetry form a series of mutually subordinate members; of which the third gives law to the second, and the second to the first, in the sense in which *purpose* is said to govern action; and the first gives law to the second, and the second to the third, in the sense in which *conditions* are said to govern action.

Wherever, in the employment of an acquired faculty or method, a new and further *purpose* dawns upon the mind as attainable by a new employment of the former means, there a new art, or a new branch of an old art, begins; and thus it is that the art of style grows out of language, and the art of poetry out of style. As each new art is developed, the prior art, out of which it grew, tends to become fixed and rigid, limited as it were to its *end*, which has now become more definite, being taken as the starting point of the new art which is its offspring. The older arts are then no longer free, as having no ends but their own; they have become means to a further end, that of the new art to which they have given birth. All their powers are at the disposal of their latest descendant, which having no purpose to serve but its own is free and creative. The older arts, so far as they are still subordinate to it, have now taken rank as its technical branches, or rather

as the technical conditions and instruments of an architectonic art. And such is the relation which versification, which in itself is a part of style, holds to poetry, when poetry is defined, by a reference to the larger and psychological sense of the term, as the art by which mental activity aims at the production of imaginative and emotional pleasure.

## II.

It is plain, then, that in order to understand English Metres, we must begin with the peculiarities of English language and pronunciation. We must see what courses are open to it, and how it differs from other languages, in the course which it has actually taken.

In every articulate sound four elements are to be distinguished, the duration of time which it occupies, its pitch or accent, its colour or tone, and its loudness or force.\* These four elements are inseparable, but always distinguishable from each other by thought, if not always by the ear, in every sound.

\* See on this and kindred points a valuable paper by Mr. Alex. J. Ellis, *On the Physical Constituents of Accent and Emphasis*. Transactions of the Philological Society, 1873-4, p. 113.

But for the most part they are distinguishable by the ear also, and they are those properties of sound, selection from among which by the speakers differentiates the character of their pronunciation.

The first element, duration of time; I shall call the *formal* or *quantitative*, and the three others, pitch, colour, loudness, the *material* or *qualitative* elements of sounds. By this nomenclature I bring them under the general law of phenomena of consciousness, all of which are ultimately analysable into formal and material elements.\*

It is of importance to hold fast this analysis of articulate sound into *four* distinct elements. It is the basis of the whole theory of verse. And it is just at this point, that is, in his corresponding analysis of sound, that Mitford's masterly work† is chiefly defective. That work is fully abreast of the knowledge of its time, and I suspect made valuable additions to it, so as to become the principal source of those ideas about versification which are now the received ones. But two sources of knowledge at least have since then been more fully explored, the

\* See the analysis of sounds, which is based upon that of Professor Helmholtz, in my *Theory of Practice*, vol. i. § 11.

† *An Inquiry into the Principles of Harmony in Language and of the Mechanism of Verse, Modern and Ancient.* By William Mitford. 8vo, second edition, 1804.



first being the physical conditions and mechanism of speech, and the second the history of Old English Literature, in which are contained the origins of English versification.

Mitford practically recognises only two distinct elements of sound as the basis of his theory, time being one, and tone or accent the other. It is true he gives a further distinction of tone or accent into pitch and loudness or force; and also that, basing himself on Plutarch, he reckons "syllable or letter," which he explains to mean *articulation*, as a third element by the side of time and tone.\* But articulation, syllable, or letter, cannot be held really to be an *element* of sound; it is the sound itself clearly enunciated, it is that which we are analysing into its elements. It cannot be an element of itself; and therefore it cannot be taken as the equivalent of what is now called *colour*.

And as to his distinction of tone or accent into pitch and loudness, which is a real analysis into elements, and would make his list of elements three, namely, time, pitch, and loudness, instead of time and tone only,—this distinction he practically annuls by maintaining, first, that in English, as spoken in the English or southern part of the island, high pitch

\* Work cited, p. 55-56.

and great loudness always coincide;\* and secondly, that accent meant the same thing both in ancient Greek and Latin and in the languages of modern Europe, except the French;† that is, he refuses to go behind *tone*, unanalysed, for his account of what accent consists in. Here I would remark in the first place, that it is by no means certain that pitch and loudness always coincide in English pronunciation. If they did, natural pronunciation would make nearly every line in Pope end with a high pitch, since his lines usually end with a stressed syllable. But this would often be intolerable. Take, for instance, the opening of the *Essay on Man* :

“Awake, my St. John ! leave all meaner things  
To low ambition and the pride of Kings.  
Let us (since Life can little more supply  
Than just to look about us and to die)  
Expatriate free,” &c.

How bad would be the effect here, if, following the supposed natural law of pronunciation, we raised the pitch of the last syllables in the second couplet. But even if it were granted that pitch and loudness coincide in English pronunciation, still the question remains, which of the two is the *operative* element ; that is to say, whether we raise the pitch because we

\* Work cited, pp. 57-58, 62.

† Work cited, pp. 207, 208, 235.

speak syllables loud, or speak them loud because we raise the pitch.

It is a consequence of this defective analysis, that Mitford's theory of verse is the very simple and insufficient one, that while ancient Greek and Latin verse was governed by quantity, that of modern languages, French excepted but modern Greek included, is governed by accent; accent meaning the same thing in all cases, that is, either pitch, or loudness, or both combined.\* And this theory I apprehend is the one now generally held or acquiesced in.

Now there is to my mind a far greater difference between time, the quantitative element, and the three qualitative elements of sound than there is between these three among themselves. The first is a great generic difference, the second merely specific; and accordingly that first distinction is the one we have first to take account of. Some nations appear to have been most struck with the quantitative element in sounds, the length of time which different sounds required for their utterance, or occupied to the hearing. Such nations based their pronunciation and afterwards their metres on quantity. Languages of this kind were the Greek, the Latin, and I believe I am correct in adding the Sanskrit. Others were

\* Work cited, p. 235 *et seq.*

more struck with similarities and dissimilarities of quality in sounds, and of these were the Gothic races both in the Teutonic and Scandinavian branches. The Old English or Anglo-Saxon, and its descendants, Middle and Modern English, are languages of this kind. Their pronunciation is based upon quality; and consequently we find that qualitative similarities of sound are the basis of their versification. The repetition either of vowel sounds, or of the same consonantal sounds, in forcibly pronounced syllables, constitutes the *alliteration* which is employed in the earliest known shape or law of English verse.

For our present purpose this characteristic of the English language, with its significance brought out by contrast with quantitative languages, is an ultimate fact beyond which we need not go. But it is a most interesting question, and one upon which much light may possibly yet be thrown by philology, whether the selection of quantity, or of quality, is dependent primarily upon the physical constitution of the organs of voice, or of the ear, or upon some more centrally seated constitution of the brain which determines the springs of mental and moral character.

The choice itself, whether originally springing from differences seated in the central, or from dif-

ferences seated in the peripheral organs, has at any rate an important influence upon national character, and becomes an harmonious constituent and factor in its total development. Quantity cannot be selected as the basis of pronunciation without harmonising with a musical and rhythmical speech, and accustoming the ear to seek gratification in the form of speech for its own sake, apart from the meaning conveyed by it. And again, on the other hand, since difference in the quality of sounds is that which most readily and markedly conveys difference of meaning, the choice of quality as the guiding element in speech tends to fix attention on the meaning conveyed, in preference to the form which clothes it. Impatience of form is a characteristic of the English race; delight in it of the Greek. The predominance of the material element, as I have called it, in speech is in this way closely allied to the predominance of the material element in thought, its matter or meaning as distinguished from its logical framework. And this difference between the Greek race and the English in point of pronunciation agrees with a suggestion thrown out in the foregoing Essay, as to the fundamental character of those two races in literary matters; the Greek, it was said, being led on by the pleasure of imitation and reproduction of objects ex-

ternal to him, and the Englishman spurred by a need to express some thought or feeling of his own which unexpressed would be a burden to him. It is another instance of the difference between the artistic and playful temperament of the Greek, and the serious but none the less impassioned temperament of the English race. The one is allured by the *plaisir d'aller*, in Rousseau's phrase, the other goaded by the *besoin d'arriver*.

Quantity alone, it is true, is not sufficient as a law of pronunciation, which would be monotonous in the extreme if varied only by the different durations of the successive sounds. Accordingly there was combined with it, in Greek pronunciation, one of the *qualities* of sound; and this quality is, I believe, generally held by scholars to have been that of *pitch*, giving rise to high and low *accent*. Quantity and accent together governed Greek pronunciation. Was that the selection made by the English? No. It has been already said that they did not select quantity. But which of the three qualities of sound did they choose to speak by? It was that of colour or tone as their basis, differentiated by loudness or force. What length differentiated by pitch was to Greek pronunciation, colour differentiated by loudness was to English. Colour was the basis and loud-

ness the principle of variety in English, just as duration was the basis and pitch the principle of variety in Greek. But colour and loudness were both united in stress, and this served instead of the length and pitch together of the Greeks, though at the same time it is evident that stress and long quantity would for the most part coincide. Stress therefore is the characteristic of the pronunciation of languages like the English; stress meaning the added force or loudness with which certain colours of sound are uttered, and thereby distinguished from others. And this stress was in the first instance what has been called above the word-stress.

Monosyllables in English have no word-stress of their own; whatever stress they have comes from their importance, that is, from the meaning they bear, as members of a sentence. For instance, in

“’Tis true, I am that spirit unfortunate,”

—the first five words of this line have no word-stress of their own, but some of them receive a sentence-stress, as Dr. Guest aptly calls it, from their significance in the sentence to which they belong. Very different is the case with Greek monosyllables. They have or have not an accent, that is, they have a peculiar *pitch*, of their own, which adheres to them in

whatever part of a sentence they may stand. They are thus fitted to bear a part in a musically formed system of sounds, irrespective of the part they play in determining the meaning of the whole.

Words of two or more syllables in English take one word-stress at least, and sometimes more; one primary, and one or sometimes two secondary, if the word is a long one.\* As a rule the primary word-stress falls on the root or main syllable of the word;† on this syllable meaning and stress coincide, and that previously to any sentence-stress being laid on it. The Englishman thus seems to rush, as it were, at the meaning, and hasten to express it; he is attracted by the colours of sound to which the meaning is attached, and to these he gives increased force, sinking the rest of the word into comparative obscurity. There is hardly a limit to the number of syllables, or to the amount of crowded consonantal sound, which the English ear and tongue will endure, nay even delight in. And this character of rushing at the meaning is still farther shown by the habit we have of throwing the word-stress as far back as possible, in all words of foreign origin, and of which the origin is either unknown or forgotten. Only the

\* Guest. *History of English Rhythms*, vol. i. p. 78-9.

† *Ibid.* p. 99.



other day I heard a comparatively cultured person speak of a train rushing down an *incline*, with the stress on the first syllable; and also laying the stress on the second syllable in *Mausóleum*, not apparently from any knowledge that this syllable was long in the Greek name, but rather from not knowing that the penultimate syllable was so too. How different all this is from the accentuation of Greek and Latin needs not to be pointed out.

This peculiarity of English, however, is the foundation of some of its greatest beauties in poetry. It has been seized by Mr. Tennyson in that splendid piece of declamation, his *Boödicea*. The idea of the metre there employed seems to have been suggested by the rhythmical flow of the Galliambic as used by Catullus in his *Attis*:

“*Super alta vectus Attis celeri rate maria,*”

—not directly by its *metre*, but by the effect of the metre as *read*, replacing accents by stresses. Even this is not copied, but by true poetic instinct adapted to the English language, and an equivalent, indeed to my English ear far more than an equivalent, to the effect of the Latin line is produced:

“Hear Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear Coritanian, Trí-  
nobant !

While I roved about the forest, long and bitterly méditating,

There I heard them in the darkness, at the mystical cére-  
 mony,  
 Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang the terrible pró-  
 phetesses :  
 ‘Fear not isle of blowing woodlands, isle of silvery  
 párapets !  
 Tho’ the Roman eagle shadow thee,’ ” &c.

In the closing words of the second, third, and fourth of these lines, advantage is taken of the property of English which has been mentioned ; the stressed syllable has three unstressed syllables following it. But lines of this exceptional fulness and rapidity are only interspersed ; the usual metre stands nearer to the Latin, as in the first and fifth lines, where the closing word has only two unstressed syllables following the stressed one. Sometimes, too, the line ends with a stressed syllable, recalling the cases where a long syllable ends the line in Latin ; as in

“Thine the North and thine the South and thine the  
 battle-thunder of Gód.”

It may be doubted whether such is not the *only* true way of turning classical metres to advantage ; but of this I shall have more to say presently.

## III.

THE English language having the characteristics which have been mentioned, it will be seen at once how natural and almost inevitable it was, that its earliest metres should be *alliterative*. Metre is a volitional selection and enforcement on a larger scale, that is, in sentences or periods, of the same elements of sound which were attractive in word pronunciation; a conscious adoption of those elements as the principle of a *method* used for a purpose additional to that of the mere recalling and communication of thought. On this larger scale the rudiments of quantity begin to appear; for it is requisite, in order to give metrical pleasure, not indeed to measure length against length in phrases or in syllables, but to have a response of phrase to phrase, in which sounds of similar quality are repeated.

In fact, as Mr. Coventry Patmore, himself a poet, most logically insists, in his instructive *Prefatory Study of English Metrical Law*,\* “time measured implies something that measures, *and is therefore itself unmeasured*.” Only I do not say, as Mr. Patmore does, that *time* is the thing measured; it is rather the concrete flow of words and

\* Prefixed to his *Amelia*. London, 1878, p. 25.

phrases which occupy the time. This distinction is important, as being the very point at which the two classes of theories diverge from one another, those which base English metre on quantity, and those which base it upon stress. English metres do not aim, as it seems to me, at dividing time into equal or proportionate lengths; they aim at a response of phrase to phrase, and sound to sound. Mr. Patmore holds rightly, that stress, or accent as he calls it, is the *sole* source of English metre; but he employs it, illogically in my opinion, to divide time into isochronous bars.\* Why isochronous? For if its purpose is to divide time into isochronous bars, then surely the pleasure taken in equality of time-lengths must be not only another source but the chief source of the metre, stress becoming merely the means of marking the lengths and attaining the pleasure.†

Quantity used in the large sense I have given it,

\* Work cited, p. 24, 25, 34.

† This criticism leaves unaffected, I believe, Mr. Patmore's "great general law," stated at p. 44, "that the *elementary measure or integer of English verse is double the measure of ordinary prose*,—that is to say, it is the space which is bounded by *alternate accents*;"—which means, if I understand it rightly, that *two stresses* (which would make what I call a *response*) are the unit of versification. This does not necessarily involve isochronous intervals.

namely, lengths of concrete speech marked off by stresses, is obviously very different from quantity in the sense of *equal* lengths of the time which speech occupies, and still more from the measured quantity of syllables, as in Greek, giving rise to *feet* measured and defined by the length and number of the syllables they consist of. There is in English verse correspondence of phrase to phrase, containing similar qualities of sound in some of their stressed syllables, but there is little if any counting of syllables, no measuring of lengths of time, and consequently no correspondence of measured feet.

“Our Anglo-Saxon poems,” says Dr. Guest, “consist of certain versicles, or, as we have hitherto termed them, *sections*, bound together in pairs by the laws of alliteration. \* \* \* For the most part these sections contain two or three accents” [*stresses* in my nomenclature], “but some are found containing four or even five. The greater number of these longer sections may be divided into two parts, which generally fulfil all the conditions of an alliterative couplet; and in some manuscripts are actually found so divided.”\*

Speaking farther of the elementary versicle or section, Dr. Guest gives the following as the rules of its accentuation :

“1. Each couple of adjacent accents” [read always *stresses* in my nomenclature] “must be separated by one-

\* *History, &c.* vol. i. p. 163.

or two syllables which are unaccented, but not by more than two.

2. No section can have more than three, or less than two accents.

3. No section can begin or end with more than two unaccented syllables."\*

Now since the number of stresses and syllables admissible into an alliterative couplet was at any rate not closely fixed, and since there was no final rhyme to hold the sections together, but their bond was an *internal* one, namely, alliteration, it is plain that the point of division between the two sections, marked by the *middle pause*, was the important characteristic and, so to speak, the centre of gravity of the whole metre. For there was nothing to mark where one couplet ended and another began, but the passing into the sphere of a different alliteration; and since there was no final rhyme, the change to a new alliteration could not be perceived till the second couplet had reached its middle pause. The use of alliteration thus involved the middle pause as its exponent; and the middle pause performed two distinct offices, that of a *division* between the sections of a couplet united by alliteration, and that of a *connection* between the couplets themselves; this latter function moreover being one, of which final rhyme is

\* *Ibid.* p. 164, and p. 217, Note E.

incapable. The middle pause thus gave unity to the sections by enforcing attention to their similarity, and unity to the couplets by compelling the reader to go on to the second as a condition of understanding the first. And still more, in consequence of this, it gave unity to the poem as a whole by being chosen as the favourite place at which to end periods; whereby one period ended and another began in the middle of a verse, just as in well constructed blank verse of modern times.

As an ounce of exemplification is worth pounds of explanation, I will take the liberty to quote the opening passage of the poem on the Creation, usually attributed to Cædmon, from Dr. Guest's pages,\* along with his scanning and translation. The middle pause is shown by a colon (:), but I replace Dr. Guest's upright lines by the more familiar marks of accentuation :

“Uʒ is riht mícel: thaēt we ródera weárd  
 Wéreda wúldor-cíning: wórdum hérigen  
 Móðum lúfien: hé is mægna sped  
 Heáfod eálra: heáh-gesceáfta  
 Freá ælmihtig: náes him frúma áfre  
 Oʒ gewórden: né nu eníde cýmth  
 Écean drihtnes: aǽ he bíth a ríce  
 Ófer heófen-stólas: heágum thrýmmum  
 Sóth-fæst and swíth-ferom:

\* *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 26.

Mickle right it is, that we heaven's guard  
 (Glory-king of hosts !) with words should hery [honour],  
 With hearts should love. He is of pow'rs the efficacy,  
 Head of all high creations,  
 Lord Almighty ! In him beginning never  
 Or origin hath been, nor end cometh now  
 To the eternal Lord ; but he is aye supreme  
 Over heaven-thrones, with high majesty,  
 Righteous and mighty."

As an instance of a longer rhythm, take the following from the same source :\*

"Ísthes áenga styðe. úngelic swíthe : tham óthrum thé we  
 ær cuthon

Héan on heófon-ríce : the mé min heárra onlág  
 Theáhh we híne fór tham álwaldan : ágan ne móston  
 Rómigan úres ríces : náefth he theah ríht gedón  
 Thaét he us háefth befiélled : fyre to bótme  
 Héлле thaére hátan : heófon-ríce benúmen  
 Háfath hit geméarcod : mid món-cynne  
 Tó" geséttane :

This narrow stead is much unlike to that other, which  
 erst we knew,

High in heaven's realm, which on me my Lord bestow'd ;  
 Though, for the All-wielder, it we may not have—  
 Must quit us of our realm ! Yet hath he not right y-done,  
 In that he us hath fell'd, to the fiery bottom  
 Of this hot hell ; hath heaven's realm bereft us,  
 And it hath destin'd by mankind  
 To be peopled !"

The general type of metre, of which these are

\* *Ibid.* p. 38-9.



instances, prevailed down to the end of the tenth or beginning of the eleventh century, when it was overtaken by what Dr. Guest calls a revolution, which deeply affected its character. This change, he says, consisted in the subordination of the middle to the final pause, instead of *vice versa*; and was in some degree assisted by the introduction of final rhyme (meaning rhyme between the sections), which was learnt, in all probability, from the rhyming Latin of ecclesiastical scholars.\* After tracing the change up to Wulfstan, or Lupus, Bishop of Worcester, afterwards Archbishop of York, who died in 1023, Dr. Guest proceeds :

“The importance of this change can hardly be over-rated. Not only did it enable our native rhythms to accommodate themselves to the flow of the different Latin ‘rhythmi,’ but it contained within itself the germ of almost every other change, which has since occurred in English versification. Had there been *no* foreign models to imitate, it must still have led the way to the invention of the stave, the rhiming couplet, and other similar novelties, no less surely in our own language than in the Icelandic. The subordination of the middle pause first began to show itself a little before the year 1000, and at the close of the eleventh century, we find it very generally prevalent in English poetry.”

“To this century also we probably owe the first introduction of final rhyme. But the influence it exercised

\* *Ibid.* vol. i. p. 119-120, vol. ii. p. 278-9.

over our rhythms was by no means so great as might have been expected. If we may judge from such poems as have come down to us, it only occasionally controlled the pronunciation.”\*

But the introduction of a still greater and more disturbing influence was impending, owing to the Norman Conquest. The history of the English language and literature is the history of a native growth exposed to two great foreign influences, with both of which it struggles, elements from both of which it assimilates and incorporates, surviving their impact not without change, but still without loss of identity, and with the native principle of vitality unimpaired. These two foreign influences were, first, Latin literature imported by the ecclesiastics, and secondly the Norman French language and literature imported by the Norman aristocracy and their dependents. The latter of these was by far the more powerful and searching.

For two centuries at least after the Norman Conquest there were two distinct languages and two distinct literatures in England. The English language, indeed, was maimed by the decay of its literature both in quantity and quality, and almost died down again into its dialects. Still it subsisted, and being

\* *Ibid.* vol. ii. p. 403-4.

the language of the mass of the people, and that people a mentally vigorous one, it slowly repaired its injuries and renewed its powers. It was the ever memorable and glorious reign of Henry III., memorable and glorious not for the king and his partisans, but for the people of England and their great leaders, Hubert de Burgh, Simon de Montfort, and others,—it was this period that determined that England should thenceforth *be* England. “Is not this he,” as the smith who was called upon to rivet the fetters of De Burgh is reported to have exclaimed, “is not this that noble Hubert who has made England England?”\* True, the battle of Evesham† was lost; but the cause for which it was fought was won.

This was the decisive period. Politically and socially first, but then also linguistically, then in literature, and then in the forms of verse, the welding of England into unity was now decided. Decided, not completed. That was the work of two more centuries,‡ ending with the disturbed period of the Wars of the Roses, which broke the power of the old

\* *English History for the use of Public Schools.* By the Rev. J. Franck Bright. Vol. i, p. 149.

† A.D. 1265. Just one year short of two centuries from the Conquest.

‡ 220 years if we count to the battle of Bosworth, 1485; 206 years if we count to the setting up of Caxton's printing press, 1471.

aristocracy, and led the way to the establishment of a despotic monarchy resting on popular favour. Then it was, and under those conditions, that modern England emerged, England one and indivisible,—English in every vein and every pulse of national life.

I cannot attempt to give even in outline the steps by which this welding was either decided or completed; or to name even the chief literary works in which the stages of that history may be traced. But just as we have seen what was the general type of English Verse previous to the eleventh century, so it is necessary to see briefly what are some at least of the most important foreign elements which it had to struggle with and assimilate.

For this purpose let us take the first stanza, so to call it, of the *Chanson de Roland*, which I copy from M. Léon Gautier's splendid edition, along with his translation :

“ Carles li Reis, nostre emperere magnés,  
Set anz tuz pleins ad estet en Espaigne :  
Cunquist la tere tresq' en la mer attaigne.  
N'i ad castel ki devant lui remaigne ;  
Murs ne citez n'i est remés à fraindre  
Fors Sarraguce, ki est en une muntaigne.  
Li reis Marsilies la tient, ki Deu n' enaimet ;  
Mahumet sert e Apollin recleimet :  
Ne s' poet garder que mals ne li ateignet.

Charles le Roi, notre grand empereur,  
 Sept ans entiers est resté en Espagne :  
 Jusqu'à la haute mer, il a conquis la terre.  
 Pas de château qui tienne devant lui,  
 Pas de cité ni de mur qui reste encore debout  
 Hors Saragosse, qui est au haut d'une montagne.  
 Le roi Marsile la tient, Marsile qui n'aime pas Dieu,  
 Qui sert Mahomet et prie Apollon ;  
 Mais le malheur va l'atteindre : il ne s'en peut garder."

What are the characteristics of this verse? I borrow the words of a recent most able historian of English literature, Herr B. ten Brink :

"A Romanic nation here meets us, whose mind has stamped itself even more distinctly on the form than on the matter of its Epos. The verse does not here depend on those syllables which are spoken out with greater energy owing to their weight of meaning ; but each syllable seems originally to have equal right to its position, and the verse is built up as it were of rhythmical atoms, the number of which determines its character. Their order determines it only so far as this, that the *arsis* at the end of the line and at the *cæsura* always requires an accented (*betonte*) syllable. Instead of alliteration which brings into prominence words and thoughts, we have here final rhyme in its original form, that of assonance, affecting the vowels only, in order to mark the unity of single lines, and combine them into the unity of longer systems. These systems are here still extremely simple ; a continuous assonance connects an arbitrary number of ten-syllabled lines into a more or less rounded-off whole."\*

\* *Geschichte der Englischen Litteratur*, vol. i. p. 155.

It can hardly be doubted, I think, that we have in the verse of the *Chanson de Roland* the foundation of that verse of five stresses which, both in rhymed and unrhymed shape, became afterwards so common in English poetry, in Chaucer, Shakspeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, &c. &c. In rhymed verse it drops the strict coincidence of the middle break with the end of a word; in blank verse it drops rhyme as well; and it uses stress as the principle by which it moves, instead of sameness in the number of its syllables or of its feet. Still it remains the foundation of these forms of English verse, notwithstanding the changes made in it.

Another form of verse due to the Normans is the Alexandrine. The first poem known to be composed in this verse is the *Charlemagne*, before the end of the eleventh century. The name seems to have been given to it later, from a poem on the subject of Alexander, in the latter half of the twelfth century.\*

Two other forms, one of which became extremely common in later English poetry, the rhyming couplet of six and the rhyming couplet of eight syllables, or, as we use them, of three and of four stresses to the line, are of Norman introduction. Philip de Thaun employs them both for the first time in the

\* *Ibid.* p. 159, 207.

beginning of the twelfth century.\* The rhyming couplet of four stresses in English is found for the first time, at least as carried through a whole poem, in the rhyming version of the *Paternoster*, in the latter half of that century.†

“ Ure feder thet in heovene is  
 Thet is al soth ful iwis.  
 We moten to theos weordes iseon.  
 Thet to liue and to saule gode beon.”‡

Herr ten Brink also remarks, that this poem shows the influence of the masculine and feminine rhymes of French verse, in the circumstance that the two-syllabled endings of many of the lines count only for one metrical stress, and not for two, as in the similar verses of the *Proverbs of Alfred*, of about the same date, or perhaps earlier. To me, I must confess, this appears somewhat doubtful; though I do not for a moment set up my judgment against his.

Another extremely common form of English verse, which in one of its shapes is popularly known as the ballad metre, comes probably, not from Norman French, but directly from the Latin Iambic Tetra-

\* *Ibid.* p. 171, 172.

† *Ibid.* p. 195.

‡ *Old English Homilies. First Series*, p. 55, ed. by Dr. R. Morris. In the Early English Text Society's Publications.

meter Catalectic. This is the form in which the well known *Moral Ode* is written, probably about the middle of the twelfth century, to which Herr ten Brink attributes the greatest influence on later English verse.\* It begins in one MS. as follows :

“ Ich em nu alder thene ich wes awintre and a lare.  
 Ich welde mare thene ich dede mi wit ahte bon mare.  
 Wel longe ich habbe child ibon a worde and a dede  
 Thah ich bo a wintre ald to [y]ung ich em on rede.  
 I am now older than I was in years and in lore,  
 I wield more than I did, my wit ought to be more.  
 Well long have I been a child, in words and in deeds,  
 Though I be old in years, too young am I in wisdom.”†

This is just the metre of the *Ormulum*, perhaps about a century later, except that the *Ormulum* is as a rule unrhymed :

“ Thiss boc is nemmedd Ormulum  
 Forrthi thatt Orm itt wrohhte,  
 And itt iss wrohht off quaththrigan  
 Off Goddspellbokess fowwre ;  
 Off quaththrigan Amminadab,  
 Of Cristess Goddspellbokess.”‡

There we have the living parent stock of modern

\* *Geschichte, &c.* vol. i. p. 192-4.

† *Old English Homilies*. Part I. p. 159. Early English Text Society.

‡ *The Ormulum*, ed. by Robert Meadows White, D.D. Oxford, 1852. I have modernised the Old English characters in some places. *Quaththrigan* is derived, in the Glossary to the work, from *quadriga*. The Four Gospels are intended by it, as the poem



English verse, say rather of English verse of all times, laid bare. Orrmin strips off and lays aside both the old principle of alliteration and the new principle of rhyme; but he retains the perennial principle of stress as the life-blood of his metre, stress being, as we have seen, the union of colour and loudness. And this is how I should understand Herr ten Brink, when he says, near the beginning of his work:

“At the basis lies a measure which has belonged to the antiquity of all Teutonic races, the long line of eight lifts of the voice (*achtmal gehobene*), divided into two equal parts by *cæsure*. A noble form, probably an inheritance of Indo-germanic times, developed also by the classical races into several varieties, and appearing at its purest in the Iambic Tetrameter.”\*

We may say, if we please, that the capacity for the Iambic Tetrameter was latent from the first in the Indo-germanic stock; but the diverging families developed it explicitly under different conditions, at different times, and therefore also in different forms.

The form which it takes in the *Ormulum* is evidence that it is neither rhyme, nor alliteration, nor

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goes on to explain. *Amminadab* also is explained in the poem as a name given to our Lord from his voluntary submission to death, *spontaneus* being said to be the meaning of the word in Latin.

\* *Geschichte*, &c. vol. i. p. 28.

counting of syllables, nor measuring of feet, but *stress*, which is the great principle of English verse, in whatever other forms it may be found clothed. The recurrence of stress is the formative law which builds up the living frame of the verse. I say of the *verse*, not of the *poetry*. For the poetry depends upon yet another development of the same principle, upon the use of the metrical stress as the vehicle of the rhetorical, emphatic, or poetic stress, which is a deeper principle still; which is, if we may carry on the metaphor, the soul which animates the metrical frame, the *nisus formativus* of the law itself. This, however, is a point which we must reserve for the present.

Alliteration was by no means dead because one Englishman had dispensed with it. We see its intense vitality in the fact that Langland, a contemporary of Chaucer and of Wicliffe, employed it in his long and noble poem *The Vision of Piers Ploughman*, in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Like the two languages, English and Norman, so the two forms of verse, alliteration and rhyme, exist concurrently; and few English ears can even now, I think, resist the charm of the alliterative metre, handled as Langland handles it:

“ In a somer sesun • whon softe was the sonne,  
I schop me in-to a schroud • A scheep as I were ;

In Habite of an Hermite • vnholý of werkes,  
 Wende I wydene in this world • wondres to here.  
 Bote in a Mayes Morwnynge • on Maluerne hulles  
 Me bi-fel a ferly • A Feyrie me thouhte ;  
 I was weori of wandringe • and wente me to reste  
 Vndur a brod banke • bi a Bourne syde,  
 And as I lay and leonede • and lokede on the watres,  
 I slumberde in A slepyng • hit sownede so murie.”\*

The ultimate victory of final rhyme over alliteration, as the ruling metrical principle of verse, seems to have been assured by this, that it gave a fuller and more definite satisfaction to that craving of the English ear for qualitative similarities, which alliteration itself, as a metrical principle, was instituted to satisfy. The elements of sameness in rhyming sounds were more numerous than in alliteration, and forced the ear to a more complete analysis of them. Alliteration was a sameness in the initial sound of the stressed syllable in words, the other sounds in the words being different and less attended to. Rhyme was a difference solely in the initial sound of the stressed syllable, with complete sameness of all the following sounds,—*good stood, shivering quivering*. Both difference and sameness had to be distinctly noticed in rhyme, for the whole of the rhym-

\* *The Vision of William concerning Piers Plowman*. Part I. The “Vernon” Text. Edited by the Rev. W. W. Skeat. Early English Text Society: No. 28.

ing words, after the stressed syllables, must be the same, and only the initial sounds different. Rhyme therefore was more complex and subtil as a metrical instrument. And being a satisfaction of the same craving of the ear for similarities of quality in sound, it may be said to have conquered alliteration at its own weapons.

At the same time it was by drawing attention to the *ending* of words, and by the necessary consequence of this, in order to make metrical use of it, I mean the placing those words at the end and not in the body of the verse, that the introduction of final rhyme effected the greatest change in the character of English metre. Rhyme was restricted, no less than alliteration, to fall either on syllables that had the word-stress, or on monosyllables that from their logical importance might have a sentence-stress upon them. The last word in a line thus became both logically and metrically an important one. Verses became groups of sounds leading up to rhyming syllables, from being groups of sounds appended to alliterating syllables. Thus the change harmonised completely with the subordination of the middle to the final pause, to which Dr. Guest rightly attributes such great importance.

Moreover, since rhyme by itself, that is, as

exhibited in a single couplet, could furnish, as we have seen, no bond of connection to a whole system of verses, as alliteration with its middle pause did, therefore the adoption of rhyme led necessarily to the framing of staves or stanzas, either connected together by the recurrence of the same rhyme at various intervals, or else rounded off into unity by a single couplet at the end, as a sort of metrical full stop. Rhyme in fact, from its very incompleteness, as compared with alliteration and middle pause, was but a part of the more complex system of versification which grew out of it, and which was necessarily developed by rhyme being made to serve the further purpose of a bond of unity between groups or periods of rhyming lines.

The change from alliteration to final rhyme as the main rule of metre, with the concurrent change of pause, leading to the construction of verses on the principle of a definite number of metrical stresses, and with the chief or rhyming stress thrown to the end of each verse, is the great feature which arises in some of the verse of Middle English, and distinguishes it from that of Old, or Anglo-Saxon. And this feature and principle of verse survived the next great change in the language, the next boiling down, so to speak, of Middle English into Modern

English, with further loss of inflexion, the loss of the final *e*, which took place in the course of the fifteenth century.\* Middle and Modern English, by having one and the same *literary* language, and one and the same principle of verse, are compacted into a single language much more completely than are Old and Middle English, notwithstanding that the changes in language, at each period of transition, were changes of similar kind and the same general direction, the direction, namely, of rendering more prominent the stressed syllables in comparison with the non-stressed, of packing the consonantal sounds more closely together in non-stressed syllables by rapidity of utterance, and of obscuring the differences of vowel sounds in those syllables, in consequence of their loss of importance for purposes of inflexion.

In result it may be said, I think, that we have in England a system of verse depending on the recurrence of stress as its main principle, and that this principle is of native English origin. Rhyme which ousted alliteration as the vehicle of this principle, though owing its development to foreign influences, was probably even from the first not wholly foreign to

\* On the distinction of Old, Middle, and Modern English, see Mr. Sweet's *History of English Sounds*, in the Transactions of the Philological Society, 1873-4, p. 620.

English verse.\* But the tendency to regularity, whether shown in counting syllables or in measuring feet, was a tendency purely foreign, and chiefly due to Norman French literature. The versification which combines these various elements subordinates them to the one element of stress; for the native ear and voice are the prime source of rhythms, and whatever they learn from a foreign source they re-cast in a native mould. English verse and English poetry would not be the hardy and vigorous creations which they are, if not this law but its converse were true.

The English language is no tripping, dancing, tip-toe language, like the French. Neither is it a mouthful of hot potatoes, like the German. It is neither a *gag*, nor an *Agag*. It plants its foot firmly down on a stressed syllable as near the beginning of the word as possible, and leaves the other syllables to shift for themselves. When a balance of quantity in syllables, or a cadence in their tone, is introduced, these are adornments which are beautiful in their place, but can never go so far as to oust the stress on the main syllables, without denaturalising the native flow of the pronunciation, which will always recalcitrate, and give those more recondite beauties,

\* See Herr ten Brink. *Geschichte*, &c. vol. i. p. 28, 108-9.

when used as the main principle of construction, an air of tinsel and affectation.

Greek and Latin, I imagine, were not tripping, but more properly sing-song languages, and stater than the French. I do not of course suppose that they had no difference of stress or loudness, in their pronunciation, any more than I suppose that English had no difference of quantity; but that the ruling principle in it was, first, quantity, and secondly, to distinguish quantity, not stress but *accent*. In pronunciation they noted the duration, and they noted the pitch. The *place* of the high pitch, or acute accent, was much more varied in Greek than in Latin; in those cases where its place in a word was governed in Greek by the quantity of the last syllable, there in Latin it was governed by that of the penultimate; and the last syllable is open to more change than the last but one. Thus the accent on *ἄνθρωπος* varies its place in the genitive and dative, *ἀνθρώπου* and *ἀνθρώπων*. But if it were a Latin word, the accent would not change its place; it would fall on the penultimate in all cases, this syllable being long; though some, I believe, have held that it would be a circumflex in the nominative, the last syllable being short.\*

\* See a paper by Mr. H. A. J. Munro, *On a Metrical Latin*



Accent and quantity, two things, corresponded to stress, one thing, in English. I mean in point of *function*, both in prose and verse. And upon the harmonious combination and contrast of the two the beauty of Greek and Latin verse depended. In the well known Saturnian verse

“*Dabunt malum Metelli—Nævio poetæ*”

the *ictus* falls on the long syllables; that is, quantity determines the place of the *ictus*. But by the rules of accentuation the first syllables of the two first words, and the second syllable of the third, are accented, so that we have *dabunt* and *malum* pronounced with a high pitch on their first syllables, and a long duration given to their second. The long duration and high pitch coincide on the middle syllable of *Metelli*. In the three last feet, length and accent twice coincide, but there is one syllable, the last in *Nævio*, which has length without accent.\*

When Englishmen read Latin they naturally and spontaneously replace the Latin *accents* by *stresses*; and in reading Greek, owing I suppose partly to the more difficult rules of position in Greek, and partly to their previous acquaintance with Latin, they

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*Inscription*, in the Transactions of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, vol. x. Part II. 1860.

\* See again Mr. Munro's paper just cited.

replace the Greek accents by stresses laid where the accents would fall in Latin, not in Greek. Now this spontaneous habit of Englishmen in reading Greek and Latin, however little light it may throw on the nature of Greek and Latin, throws a strong one on the nature of English pronunciation. In reading Greek and Latin verses we either *recite* them or *scan* them, that is, read them either as marked by their accents or as marked by their quantity; always, however, replacing by a *stress*, accent in the one case, quantity in the other. But can we for a moment imagine that the Romans (say) had these two several ways of reading verse? Certainly not. They had no more two ways of reading verse than they had of reading prose. They read prose by quantity and pitch, and verse by quantity and pitch in metrical arrangement. If they had read either verse or prose by stress, it would have interfered either with the pitch or with the quantity, and so would have necessitated *two* ways of reading, according as the stress was substituted for the one or for the other. Pitch and quantity can be used together without interfering; but replace either of them by stress and the other is ruined. Stress laid on a short acute syllable makes it long, as in *cano* in the first line of the *Æneid*, so interfering with quantity.

Stress laid on the long syllables of a verse deprives the short syllables of their acute accent if they have one, so interfering with pitch. There is thus a vital difference between English pronunciation and metre, which proceed solely by stress, and Greek and Latin, which proceed by quantity and accent. These languages use the length and the pitch of sounds, English uses the logically significant syllables, to make metre. In English, therefore, the metre and the logic necessarily coincide. And this is the very basis of English versification. But in Greek and Latin verse, that coincidence must be purposely sought.

Now a versification which proceeds by quantity and accent necessarily involves the distribution of the verse into *feet*; and this involves counting syllables, for the number and quantity of their syllables are what metrical feet are defined by. But it is difficult to see how a versification which proceeds by stress should come to count syllables; for on what principle would this or that number of syllables be told off, as it were, for a foot, when no feet were used or required for the metre? True, the unstressed syllables between the stresses naturally fall into dependence on the stressed syllables; but there is nothing in the metre to show whether these un-

stressed syllables belong to the stressed syllable before them or to that after them; nor again how many unstressed syllables ought to come before or after a stressed one. The space between stress and stress is really what answers to the foot of classical metres; and the various number and different importance of the unstressed syllables, in dependence on a stressed one, give rise to those differences of measure which are known as *common* and *triple time*.

The distinction into feet, therefore, founded on the counting of syllables, is a thing which has no natural connection with metres based on stress. There are no such things as dactyls, spondees, trochees, iambs, anapæsts, and the rest, in English metre; and however convenient it may seem to call certain groups of unstressed syllables depending on a stressed one by names of this kind, the practice is misleading, and obliterates the true principle of our natural and native prosody. It is a classification not founded on the real growth and development of the thing classified; not a natural but an artificial classification. And though many of those who adopt it may admit, as they frequently do, that it is only a makeshift, and the names inappropriate, yet they do not give up the theory out of which it springs,

namely, that counting syllables stressed or unstressed is the principle of English versification. They may give up the symptom, but they retain the disease.

True, it is possible that, at the time of first adopting or imitating foreign metres, we may have made our verses by counting syllables ; if so, it was a practice which the native genius of the language did not long adhere to. But the further step of making feet, or constructing verses out of them, was I believe never taken, except in avowed imitation of classical models.

The theory asserting the principle came in naturally enough in consequence of the Renaissance, when classical scholars were tempted to imagine that Greek and Latin ideas furnished the complete and final explanation of everything. We may see the process in that most unequal and indeed avowedly self-contradictory work, the *Arte of English Poesie*, 1589, attributed to George Puttenham,\* where the author (or authors), after maintaining at p. 22 that the nature of our language and words does not permit us to frame classical feet, yet proceeds at p. 126 to show not only how “one may easily and commodiously lead all those feete of the auncients into

\* See the Work in Mr. Arber's valuable series of *English Reprints*, vol. vii.

our vulgar language," but also how they may be applied to construct not classical but ordinary English metres. The explanation of which inconsistency, apart from accidental circumstances peculiar to the writer, is that he starts from the theory that counting syllables and making rhymes are the principles of English versification.\* And the conclusion to which he finally comes is the lame one, that our old manner of poesie is to be scanned by syllables rather than by feet, but still using the words *iambic* and *trochaic* ("which ye shall discern by their accents"), and now and then a dactyl.†

Thus this theory flattered and fell in with that tendency to take pleasure in regularity, which we have seen is the foreign strain in the constitution of our English poetry. Now it is to be expected that, in a language like ours, verse will easily fall for the most part into forms in which the number of unstressed syllables between the stresses will be regular, so as to give the semblance of regular feet; and this regularity will be even aimed at as a beauty by many writers, for the reasons alleged. Nevertheless the counting of syllables, upon which feet-making depends, though enabled by the general regularity of the language, is not on that account a principle

\* Work cited, p. 22, 81-2, 84.

† *Ibid.* p. 141.

of its metre; for the regularity itself is a concurrent effect, not a cause, of its mode of versification.

Poets like Pope,—and be it said without a thought of disparaging even for a moment his great and admirable genius,—and critics like Johnson, love regularity for its own sake, just as poets like Shakspeare, Milton, and Shelley, love a rhythm varied by emphasis in tone and cadence, in which the metrical structure of the verse is used as an instrument on which to play, not as being itself the melody played. Regularity sought in this way is not a principle of the metre, but a beauty sought for by means of the metre; just as variety is, when sought for by writers with an ear for harmony. It is illogical to set down regularity of this kind as an essential principle of the structure of the verse.

It is no doubt extremely effective for many purposes, and most of all when there is perfect regularity in the metrical stresses of the verse, and perfect coincidence between the metrical stresses and the emphatic stresses demanded by the meaning, as for instance in Wordsworth's lines *At Vallombrosa* :

“ For he and he only with wisdom is blest

Who, gathering true pleasures wherever they grow,  
Looks up in all places, for joy or for rest,

To the Fountain whence Time and Eternity flow.”

Or again, and still more perfectly, in Scott's famous ballad *The Fire-King* :

“For dówn came the Témplars, like Cédron in flóod,  
And dyéd their long lánces in Sáracen blóod.”

Some other points about this couplet will be noted presently. Meantime I would ask, are these lines composed on the principle of eleven syllables to the line, or three syllables to the foot, *plus* one to start with and another to end with, or are they composed on the principle of four stresses in each line, responding to each other two and two, so that the two lines respond to each other, and each line consists of two members likewise responding, but less markedly than the lines?

#### IV.

ADOPTING, then, the hypothesis that stress, laid always on logically significant syllables, is the great guiding principle of the native and spontaneous versification of English, let us see how this principle will furnish a *rationale* of our various metres, first rhymed, afterwards unrhymed, but apart from the particular circumstances of their development in order of history. The manner of applying the prin-



ciple for this purpose is exceedingly simple. The number of metrical stresses in a line is either even or odd. If it is even, and the line has more than two stresses, then the line divides (by a break falling between words) in the middle, into two members which respond to each other. If the number of stresses is odd, and the line has more than three of them, then the line divides in a similar way into two unequal members; in lines of five stresses, usually into members of three and of two stresses, either of which may come first; and in lines of seven stresses, usually into members of four and of three stresses respectively, the longer member usually coming first; but this division may be overridden for purposes of poetic emphasis, when the metre is used in order to get further poetical harmony out of it. Originally, I imagine, in lines of seven stresses, the middle break fell immediately after a stressed syllable. But as the metre became more familiar, and different rhythms were introduced into it, this was perceived to be by no means indispensable, and the break was sometimes allowed to fall after an unstressed syllable. Still the beauty of the verse demanded that the break into two members should be made distinctly perceptible, and that as well in lines of five as in lines of seven stresses; otherwise the

principle of *response* would have been sacrificed. Couplets, staves, and stanzas may be constructed in almost unlimited variety by different arrangements of such lines as I have described. Into these systems lines of three and of two stresses may also be introduced; or again these shorter lines may be built up into systems by themselves.

To take lines of an uneven number of stresses first, we find the heroic rhyming couplet consisting of lines of five stresses; while the metre in which Chapman translated the *Iliad*, and that which is common in old ballads, and is used by Macaulay, are instances of lines of seven. For instance, the *Battle of Otterbourne*, in Percy's *Reliques* :

“ Yt felle abowght the Lamasse tyde,  
     When husbonds wynn ther haye,  
 The dowghtye Dowglasse bowynd him to ride,  
     In Ynglond to take a praye.”

In Lord Macaulay's *Armada* we have :

“ Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the purple  
     sea,  
 Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er again  
     shall be.”

In some stanzas of the *Lays* the syllable on which the fourth stress would naturally fall is replaced by a pause, and consequently we have the stress thrown back upon the unstressed syllable before it; a pro-

ceeding marked by printing the line as if it made two verses, as in the following stanza from the *Prophecy of Capys* :

“Thou shalt not drink from amber ;  
Thou shalt not rest on down ;  
Arabia shall not steep thy locks,  
Nor Sidon tinge thy gown.”

Here there is a half-stress on the last syllable of *amber* as well as a full stress on the first ; and also a pause after the word, so as to make a marked division between the members of the verse.

The line of seven stresses, owing to its greater length, requires the middle break to be more strongly marked, as a rule, than the line of five stresses does. It is too long to be written for many lines together with the break falling after an unstressed syllable. And this being so, then also it will appear that the first member will usually be the long one, since otherwise the ear would be drawn on to expect either an uninterrupted line, which would be unwieldy, or else a second member of three stresses, corresponding to the three marked stresses of the first member. Thus we find that Chapman usually divides his lines after the fourth stress ; and where he divides them after the third, the effect is not always admirable. For instance in *Iliad*, Book XIX. :

“And terribly thus charged his steeds, ‘Xanthus and  
 Balius,  
 Seed of the Harpy, in the charge ye undertake of us,  
*Discharge it not as when Patroclus ye left dead in field,*  
 But when with blood, for this day’s fast observed, Re-  
 venge shall yield  
 Our hearts satiety, bring us off.’”—

And again :

“*Thus Xanthus spake, ‘Ablest Achilles, now at least our care*  
*Shall bring thee off ; but not far hence the fatal minutes*  
*are*  
*Of thy grave ruin,’” &c.*

The italicised lines seem almost like attempts to obliterate the division between the two members, and make one unbroken line of them, for the sake of variety. But the effect is the very reverse. Owing to the place of the break not being distinctly perceptible, the lines, so far from running on continuously, break up into *three* portions,

“Discharge it not as when | Patroclus ye | left dead in  
 field.”  
 and

“Thus Xanthus spake, | Ablest Achilles, | now at least  
 our care.”

In the first of these two lines a single transposition of words would effect a great change,

Discharge it not as when Patroclus dead in field ye left.

The stress on *dead* being more marked than on *ye* distinctly throws the break in the line immediately after the third stress, making it divide at *when*. And that this effect is due, not directly to the greater stress on *dead*, but indirectly, by the more distinct marking of the break in consequence of it, is seen from the second line, where the corresponding word *now* is strongly stressed, and yet the line halts;—why, but because there is no perceptible division into two members?

The five-stressed lines in rhyming metres, though derived, as I apprehend, from Norman French verse, in which, I believe I am right in saying, the break always fell immediately after the second stress, or after the unstressed feminine termination of the word containing it, yet made no rule of this practice. The lines divide either after a stressed or an unstressed syllable indifferently; and almost as frequently after the third as after the second stress. Thus it is in the *Prologue* to the *Canterbury Tales*:

“Whan that Aprille with his schowres swoote  
 The drought of Marche hath perced to the roote,  
 And bathud every veyne in swich licour,  
 Of which virtue engendred is the flour;  
 Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth  
 Enspirud hath in everie holte and heeth

The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne  
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours i-ronne,  
And smale fowles maken melodie  
That slepen al the night with open yhe,  
So priketh hem nature in here corages ;—  
Thanne longen folk to gon on pilgrimages,  
And palmers for to seeken straunge strondes,  
To ferne halwes, kouthe in sondry londes ;  
And specially from every schires ende  
Of Engeland, to Canturbury they wende,  
The holy blisful martir for to seeke,  
That hem hath holpen whan that they were seeke.”

The existence of the break is indispensable, as otherwise there would be no response of part to part ; but owing to the shortness of the line, the division into two members is not so prominent as in seven-stressed lines. In fact the line of five stresses admits of being treated as one continuous line organically divided into two members, and not as if it were composed of two members which were originally separate.

The greater or less prominence of the break is one of the chief marks which distinguish regularists, such as Pope and his school, from harmonists, among whom we may count Chaucer. Still, however little prominence may be given to it, the break itself is always *there* ; and its effect is felt even when it is most obliterated and overridden by the melody

played upon the metre which it contributes to construct; as for instance, in this beautiful couplet of Shelley's :

“ Seeking among those untaught foresters  
If I could find one form resembling hers.”

The break, which is most faintly perceptible, comes in the first line after the word *seeking*, and in the second after the word *find*; at least to my ear. The word *one* is emphatic, and there is a short pause before it. Observe, too, the beautiful effect of softening the rhyme by throwing it on an unstressed syllable in *foresters*. The break is more strongly but still not obtrusively marked in Gray's elegiac metre, where it is beautifully varied :

“ For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind ?”

The break comes, to my ear, after the words *dumb*, *being*, *precincts*, and *longing*. But now compare some lines of Dryden's, and see how much more obvious the break is,—those beautiful lines which may fairly be taken as characteristic of his style, at the beginning of the *Hind and Panther* :

“ A milk-white hind, immortal and unchang'd,  
Fed on the lawns, and in the forest rang'd;

Without unspotted, innocent within,  
 She fear'd no danger, for she knew no sin.  
 Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds,  
 And Scythian shafts ; and many winged wounds  
 Aim'd at her heart ; was often fore'd to fly,  
 And doom'd to death, though fated not to die."

The verse of five stresses may be handled in the most various ways, some of which have no historical connection whatever with that variety of it to which the foregoing instances belong. The metre of Mr. Browning's *Saul* is a line of five stresses in rhyming couplets, and with these peculiarities, namely, that the stresses are usually preceded by two unstressed syllables, and very frequently fall on the end of a word ; so that the middle break, though a strong one, is almost obliterated, as a division, by other breaks in the line. Accordingly the effect produced is that of a movement consisting of five separate and powerful strides. It is a metre admirably adapted for expressing at once strong feeling and clear thought : one which we may easily imagine likely to occur to a great metrist, logically, incisively, and dramatically minded, like Mr. Browning. The poem opens thus :

" Said Abner, ' At last thou art come ! Ere I tell, ere thou speak,

Kiss my cheek, wish me well !' Then I wished it, and did kiss his cheek."



The first line divides after the third stress, the second after the second. The stresses are five in each line, and fall markedly and frequently upon the last syllables of words. The power of the metre as a vehicle of strong emotion may be judged perhaps from some lines taken farther on :

“ Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as  
                   men sung  
 The low song of the nearly-departed, and hear her faint  
                   tongue  
 Joining in while it could to the witness, ‘ Let one more  
                   attest,  
 I have lived, seen God’s hand thro’ a life-time, and all  
                   was for best !’  
 Then they sung thro’ their tears in strong triumph, not  
                   much—but the rest.”

The line of five stresses again, rhyming, but not in couplets, is used with singularly beautiful effect by a recent writer to exemplify what he somewhat ambitiously calls “ the new prosody,” that is to say, in contravention of “ the notion that all accents” [stresses] “ in poetry are alternate with unaccented syllables,” and of “ the almost universal prejudice that when two or more unaccented syllables intervene between two accented syllables the former must suffer and be slurred over.” It is true that unstressed syllables do suffer and are slurred over in common

conversation; but it is the very task of poets to make full use of them by attention to their "natural quantity and accent," a task which has never been neglected by the harmonists. It is, for instance, one of the great charms of Chaucer's versification, as was pointed out originally, I believe, by Mr. R. H. Horne, the distinguished author of *Orion*; at least he is quoted to that effect both by Edgar Poe in his *Rationale of Verse*, and by Mr. A. W. Ward in his *Chaucer*.\*

The poem to which I have just referred is entitled *London Snow*,† and begins thus :

"When men were all asleep the snow came flying,  
     In large white flakes falling on the city brown,  
 Stealthily and perpetually settling and loosely lying,  
     Hushing the latest traffic of the drowsy town;  
 Deadening, muffling, stifling its murmurs failing;  
 Lazily and incessantly floating down and down :  
     Silently sifting and veiling road, roof and railing;  
 Hiding difference, making unevenness even,  
 Into angles and crevices softly drifting and sailing."

The descriptive effect of that is to me most happy and powerful. The lines are plainly lines of five

\* In the English Men of Letters series. Note to p. 170-1. The "slurring over" spoken of in this passage is very different from the "slurring over" objected to by the New-Prosodists,—in fact its very opposite.

† In *Poems by the Author of The Growth of Love*. Third Series. E. Bumpus, Holborn Bars, London, 1880.

stresses, and the middle break is apparent in them all. The author makes use of "natural quantity and accent" not merely to give harmony and suppleness to a metre already familiar, but to build up what has almost the effect of a new metrical structure. But these principles are not now introduced for the first time into English verse. While, then, I find little that is new, theoretically, in the "new prosody," still I anticipate from it a very important and salutary effect upon practice; in what particular way will be best seen when we come to lines of two stresses.

Another instance of lines of five stresses, used in conjunction with lines of four and of three, is afforded by Miss Ingelow's beautiful poem *A Dead Year*, which begins thus :

"I took a year out of my life and story—

A dead year, and said, 'I will hew thee a tomb!

"All the kings of the nations lie in glory;"

Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom;

Swathed in linen, and precious unguents old;

Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold.

'Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory,  
Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flittermouse—

Each with his name on his brow.

"All the kings of the nations lie in glory,  
Every one in his own house:"

Then why not thou?"

The first, fifth, and sixth lines of the first stanza are lines of five stresses; the second, third, and fourth are lines of four. In the second stanza, all but the third and sixth are lines of four stresses; the third and sixth are lines of three. But note that the first line of this stanza would be a line of five stresses, were it not that the fifth stress, which would fall on the penultimate syllable of *salvatory*, is abolished; apparently to prepare the way for the rhythm of the second line of the stanza; which again by the stress on the beginning of the trisyllable *flittermouse* prepares the transition to the line of three stresses which follows it. Here again the art of the versification consists in varying the collocation of stressed with unstressed syllables.

I pause for a moment to confess, that I feel guilty of something like temerity in thus appearing to pronounce upon poets' modes of versification, especially when the poets themselves are living. What if they should indignantly declare that no such rubbish ever entered their heads? But I warn them to be careful what they say, as they will certainly be taken at their word. For my own benefit I enter a  *caveat*  of another sort, by requesting my readers once for all to preface my opinions for me with an "as it seems to me," or "till better advised;"



“ Help me to tune my dolefull notes to warbling sound,” where it is employed, in conjunction with an elaborate rhyme structure, to give variety to the otherwise monotonous succession of lines so long and so markedly regular as the Alexandrine. If that metre could have become naturalised in England as the staple of long compositions, it would assuredly have been so by a metrist so accomplished as “L. B.,” the author of this poem.

Of all our metres, the unrhymed Alexandrine, written without the strict middle break, comes nearest to the Greek tragic senarius, and thus serves best to bring out the inherent difference in the genius of the two systems of versification. Compare for the metre, and contrast for the effect, the two lines :

Μήδεϊα δ' ἡ δύστηνος ἤτιμασμένῃ\*

and

“Up from his tomb the mighty Corineus rose,”

from the Elegy on Sidney just quoted. Although the division of words in this latter line does not contravene the law of *cæsuræ*, which is the unifying principle of the Greek metre, yet how different is the effect. Even when we read the Greek line with English stress, the difference is striking. Probably

\* Eur. *Medea*, v. 20.

this is chiefly due to the logically important monosyllables *tomb* and *rose* ; and especially to the last, being in the last place. The rhythm would be brought in some degree nearer to the Greek, if we transposed the first and last words in the line :

Rose from his tomb the mighty Corineus up.

But this would obviously depart from the ordinary flow of an English sentence. We approach still nearer to the rhythm, if we make the line run :

The mighty Corineus from the sepulchre.

But this is obviously not an English metre at all. It requires the habituation of the ear to a balance of measured syllables, before it is even recognised as metre, and not rhythmical prose.

I now come to two remarkable cases of lines of even stresses, in which the influence of the rhetorical or poetical stress is seen in moulding the metrical structure itself. These are Edgar Allan Poe's *Raven*, and Mr. Tennyson's *Locksley Hall*. The historical basis or theme of the metre, in both cases, I imagine to be the trochaic tetrameter acatalectic, just as the iambic tetrameter was the basis of the ballad metre. But it would be, in my opinion, a great mistake to suppose that this is the actual metre of those two poems. No one can read either :

“Áh, distíntly Í remémber, it was in the bléak Decém-  
ber,”

or :

“Cómrades, léave me hére a líttle, whíle as yét ’tis éarly  
mórn,”

in the way indicated by the stress-marks. No. These lines are not lines of *eight* stresses ; they are lines of *four* :

“Ah, distíntly I remémber, it was in the bléak Decém-  
ber.”

and :

“Comrades, léave me here a líttle, while as yét ’tis éarly  
mórn.”

To consider the metre as actually formed by eight stresses makes it the merest jingle. The actually existing metre is a metre of four emphatic stresses to the line.

Another remarkable instance of modification, parallel to this, is furnished by two strikingly beautiful little poems by Principal Shairp, his *Paul Jones* and *The Bush aboon Traquair*, in the volume entitled *Kilmahoe and other Poems*. The former, which is part of *Kilmahoe*, begins, (and I venture to mark the stresses as I should read them :)

“The time was wíld, there did cóme o’er the séa a trou-  
bled húm

Of the márshalling of ármies and of shíps ;



Kíngs from their thrones were dáshed, and péoples, madly  
cláshed

Togéther, met in grím death gríps."

The basis of this metre is formed by lines of six stresses alternating with lines of three. But this structure is modified in the long lines by two stresses being overridden and four made emphatic, so that the result is as I have written it. This treatment of the long lines brings them into harmony with the short lines of three stresses, the long lines forming a single line each, notwithstanding the rhyming of their two members.

The fundamental structure is the same in the other poem, *The Bush aboon Traquair*; but it is not so much modified, and consequently the long lines are written as couplets, though even here the same two stresses are weakened in some degree :

“ Will ye gáng wi’ me and fáre  
To the búsh aboon Traquáir?  
Owre the hích Minchmúir we’ll up and awá’,  
This bónny summer nóon,  
While the sún shines fair aboon,  
And the lícht sklents saftly dóun on holm and há’.”

The irregularity in the introduction of unstressed syllables, joined to the modification of the metre by the emphatic stress which becomes a metrical one, is what gives these verses their special and, to my ear,

beautiful character. The rhythm of the long four-stressed lines in the first poem, and of the three-stressed lines in both, may possibly have been suggested, historically speaking, by Campbell's *Ye Mariners of England* and *Battle of the Baltic*, where the same rhythm is found, but used with greater regularity, *e.g.* :

“ ‘Hearts of oak !’ our captain cried ; when each gun  
From its adamantine lips  
Spread a death-shade round the ships,  
Like the hurricane eclipse  
Of the sun.”

Lines like these must be a real embarrassment to prosodists who scan English verse by counting feet of measured syllables. What will they make of groups of syllables like *The time was wild*, and *Kings from their thrones* ? If they would preserve any connection between the metre and the emphatic rhythm, and yet scan by feet, they must call these groups *Pæon quartus* and *Pæon primus* ; unless they adopt Mr. Ruskin's new importations (whether inventions of his or not I cannot say) and christen them *Trine-anapæst* and *Trine-dactyl*.

Mr. Ruskin has lately dashed off some dogmas on this subject, and called them *Elements of English Prosody*, in which, applying an old, perhaps I might

say the current theory, he scans English verse by Greek feet, or metres as he calls them, spondees, dactyls, trochees, &c., ending with the two I have just named. Let us see where this doctrine leads him. He tells us that Mr. Tennyson's well known line,

“Come into the garden, Maud,”

is anapæstic; and he lays the metrical stresses on the first syllables of *into* and *garden*, and on the monosyllable *Maud*.<sup>\*</sup> (I omit the musical notation which he gives.) To my mind this is atrocious. The whole stanza runs as follows :

“Come into the garden, Maud,  
For the black bat, night, has flown,  
Come into the garden, Maud,  
I am here at the gate alone ;  
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,  
And the musk of the roses blown.”

I should read the first and third lines with a strong stress on *Come*, and on the first syllable of *garden*, leaving everything else more or less unstressed. The lover is eager for her to *come*; he is waiting at the gate; she is in the house. He wants her to come to him where he is waiting. Come;—don't *delay*. Emphasizing *into* contrasts his wish, not with *delay*, but with *get out* of the garden. Now

<sup>\*</sup> *Elements*, &c. p. 17-18.

English metre, as I have tried to show, is *framed by means of* the logically significant words.

Not, however, that I take *logical* here to mean discursive or formal reasoning, opposed to imaginative, but in the large sense of containing a rational meaning. Perceptive and imaginative logic is the logic of poetry; and this must never be lost sight of. I suspect that it is Mr. Ruskin's bad prosody which leads him to fall into this very error, in criticising another passage from Mr. Tennyson. He quotes the following stanza from *In Memoriam* :

“ Or that the past will always win  
A glory from its being far,  
And orb into the perfect star  
We saw not, when we moved therein.”

Then he says, “ If the reader has intelligence enough to put the accent on the *or*, and *be* of being, the verse comes right;” &c. My intelligence is not enough, I confess, to make me put the accent on the *be* of being, though it is adequate to the *or*. To put a stress on the *be* of being is to make logic of the verse, and bad logic into the bargain. The true stress is on *far*. That gives an imaginative picture of the receding past. Whereas to lay stress on *being* is to give an *argument* for the past winning a glory, and a bad argument to boot, because

much of the past is very near, yesterday for instance.

Coming to lines of four stresses, we have, for instance, from Clough's *Qua cursum ventus* :

“ At dead of night their sails were filled,  
 And onward each rejoicing steered—  
 Ah, neither blame, for neither willed,  
 Or wist, what first with morn appeared !”

From Wordsworth's *Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle* :

“ He hath flung aside his crook,  
 And hath buried deep his book ;  
 Armour rusting in his halls  
 On the blood of Clifford calls.”

In Scott's *Lord of the Isles* we have lines of four stresses mixed with lines of three :

“ Merrily, merrily bounds the bark,  
 She bounds before the gale,  
 The mountain breeze from Ben-na-darch  
 Is joyous in her sail.”

Systems of lines of four stresses, rhyming in couplets for the most part, but with many variations on this form, are the metre so often used by Scott and Byron, and recently by Conington in his noble version of the *Æneid*, and with distinct consciousness of the principle of *stress* by Coleridge in his *Christabel* :

“ ’Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,  
 And the owls have awaken’d the crowing cock,  
 Tu-whit !——Tu-whoo !  
 And hark, again ! the crowing cock,  
 How drowsily it crew.”

Lines of three stresses do not fall into two members, nor yet, strictly speaking, do lines of two ; though even in these we see the principle of *response* still preserved. Lines of three and of two stresses are more properly *members* of lines, than full lines themselves, though even in the members the structural principle of a complete verse is discernible. Stress and response are the principles of both. Mr. Browning’s *Misconceptions* is an instance of stanzas of three-stressed lines, ending with couplets of four-stressed lines :

“ This is a spray the Bird clung to,  
     Making it blossom with pleasure,  
 Ere the high tree-top she sprung to,  
     Fit for her nest and her treasure.  
     Oh, what a hope beyond measure  
 Was the poor spray’s, which the flying feet hung to,—  
 So to be singled out, built in, and sung to !”

Instances of lines of two stresses are the *Coronach* in Scott’s *Lady of the Lake* :

“ He is gone on the mountain,  
     He is lost to the forest,  
 Like a summer-dried fountain,  
     When our need was the sorest.” &c.

Or the *Pibroch of Donald Dhu* :

“ Come as the winds come, when  
Forests are rended ;  
Come as the waves come, when  
Navies are stranded : ” &c.

Or Mr. Matthew Arnold's swiftly moving verses at the end of his *Empedocles*,—and beautiful verses they are :

“ Not here, O Apollo !  
Are haunts meet for thee.  
But, where Helicon breaks down  
In cliff to the sea,  
  
Where the moon-silver'd inlets  
Send far their light voice  
Up the still vale of Thisbe,  
O speed, and rejoice.”

Usage of a totally different character is met with in Mr. Browning's *After*, where lines of two stresses are found alternating with lines of three :

“ Take the cloak from his face, and at first  
Let the corpse do its worst.” &c.

This is in fact the same metre as in the *Saul*, only with each line broken up into two, as indeed the *Saul* was originally printed, in *Bells and Pomegranates*. The second member taken by itself is a line of two stresses.

Another instance, the rhythm of which again is

quite different in character, is found in some exquisite verses by Mr. Rossetti, translated from Italian of his own, on the rhythm of which their rhythm is moulded. They are a song inserted in his poem *The Last Confession*, and begin thus :

“ *La bella donna  
Piangendo disse :  
‘ Come son fisse  
Le stelle in cielo !  
Quel fiato anelo  
Dello stanco sole,  
Quanto m’ assonna !  
E la luna, macchiata  
Come uno specchio  
Logoro e vecchio,—  
Faccia affannata,  
Che cosa vuole ?* ”

“ She wept, sweet lady,  
And said in weeping :  
‘ What spell is keeping  
The stars so steady ?  
Why does the power  
Of the sun’s noon-hour  
To sleep so move me ?  
And the moon in heaven,  
Stained where she passes  
As a worn-out glass is,—  
Wearily driven,  
Why walks she above me ? ”

It is in metres of this kind, and in what are



called lyric metres generally, that the practical influence of the “new prosody” will be felt, and that by reason of the new attention paid to “natural quantity and accent.” In these particulars it is, I think, undeniable that there is room for great improvement, that the ear of even the best metrists permits itself to be satisfied too easily. Take for instance the third line of Scott’s *Coronach*,

“Like a summer-dried fountain.”

*Dried* is both a word of naturally long quantity, and as used here has a certain necessary logical stress, and yet it is used as an unstressed syllable. Accordingly the line does not wholly satisfy the ear; there is felt to be a hitch somewhere; and this is no doubt owing to the word *dried*, for what reason we must try to make out.

Again in the two stanzas quoted from Mr. Matthew Arnold, there is a perceptible difference in smoothness between the two, particularly if we take the lines (as I, however, do *not*) to consist of a fixed number of stresses or feet formed by stresses. The word *meet* in the second line, and the word *down* at the end of the third, in the first stanza, are hitches in the smoothness. Both words, it will be observed, are not only long in quantity, but have, as here used, a certain logical stress also. Yet they are used

where wholly unstressed syllables would be better. In the second stanza the word *light*, in the second line, is the only word upon which even a shadow of uncertainty hangs. The second stanza, then, is far smoother than the first. The hitch, as I have called it, in both these cases was pointed out to me and accounted for as above by the writer of *London Snow* in the new prosody, on my quoting the verses to him. And at this point it is, that the new attention to "natural quantity and accent" will make its influence practically felt, in my opinion, by sharpening our ear, refining its sensibility, and thus setting up a higher standard of attainment.

There is nevertheless a great difference between the two things to which attention is thus newly directed, I mean, natural quantity and natural accent or stress, inasmuch as English verse is founded on the one and is not founded on the other. Saying that English verse is founded on stress is of course totally different from saying that it consists of *feet* founded on stress. Neither does it consist (as I maintain) of feet founded on stress, nor is the number or the weight of the stresses *fixed* in any English verse; but their normal number and weight are always liable to be overridden for the purpose of poetical expression, so as to destroy the regularity

which would be rigorously necessary if the lines were taken to consist of feet.

To show this, take the following stanzas from Mr. Matthew Arnold's lines called *Parting* :

“ Blow, ye winds ! lift me with you !  
 I come to the wild.  
 Fold closely, O Nature !  
 Thine arms round thy child.  
  
 To thee only God granted  
 A heart ever new :  
 To all always open ;  
 To all always true.”

The normal number of stresses to a line is here two. But are we to say that the first line in each stanza is faulty because it has four, though not equally weighty, stresses ? Are we to say, that the poet is composing in English anapæsts, two to the line, and require him to keep closely to that form and number of feet, except where the laws of inversion and substitution (whatever they may be) permit him to deviate ? Is the first line faulty because *Blow, ye winds !* is not an anapæst, nor a legitimate substitute for one ? I at least cannot believe it. On the other hand, what is rigorously necessary in these lines is this,—a stressed syllable at the end of the second and fourth lines in each stanza, and an unstressed

syllable at the end of the first and third. That is necessary to realise the character of the rhythm.

Now apply this criticism to the lines before quoted. It will, I think, justify the line,

“Are haunts meet for thee,”

because *meet* will then fairly receive a half-stress, with additional clearness to the meaning, and without injury to the rhythm; this half-stress being invited to be laid on it by the long quantity of the word.

On the other hand, the same criticism will not, I think, justify

“But where Helicon breaks down,”

because *down*, which is not only long in quantity but has a half-stress, which, as the essential supplement to *breaks*, completing the image, it cannot shake off, interrupts the flow of the rhythm at the very point where it is absolutely required to be swift.

Again, it will not, I think, justify Scott's

“Like a summer-dried fountain,”

because to place a half-stress on *dried* (unlike that on *meet*) adds nothing to the poetic meaning; the full stress on *summer* is quite sufficient, *summer-dried* being a single word, just as *cannot* is a single word, which, even when the negation in it is in-

tended to be emphasized, still has the stress on the first syllable. Yet the long quantity of *dried* invites us to lay a half-stress on it; we find ourselves embarrassed; asking ourselves whether *summer-dry* would not do as well; a hesitation fatal to the enjoyment of the verse.

We see, then, from these three cases, that it is not the length of *down* and *dried*, but the stress which their length invites us to lay on them, that makes them faulty; length, however, not being the only reason for our laying the stress. Quantity, therefore, though not the foundation, is a condition which must be reckoned with in English versification. It is so in virtue of its being a natural characteristic inherent in uttered speech. Let us see some more of its relations to stress.

Stress falling on a naturally short syllable gives it either length or weight, which is equivalent to length; falling on a naturally long syllable gives it weight in addition; and to abstain from laying stress on a long syllable is to make it more or less equivalent to a short one. But natural quantity has distinctions of its own also, which are always present. These are of two kinds, quantity of the vowel sounds, as in like and lick; and quantity by position of vowels before, or say rather either before or after,

consonants. A vowel sound mixed up with much consonantal sound requires a comparatively long time to utter; and so also, though for a different reason, namely habitual usage, does a long vowel sound, as the *ee* sound in *feet*, compared to the *i* sound in *fit*.

Take for instance, to show the result of this, the word *like* in the second and third stanzas of Shelley's *Sensitive Plant*:

“ And the Spring arose on the garden fair,  
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;  
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast  
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss  
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,  
Like a doe in the noon-tide with love's sweet want,  
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.”

What I wish to remark is, that *like* in both places is naturally long, but absence of stress permits it to be used as short. Still the effect is not so good as if it were naturally a short syllable. And that quantity is really the reason of this is evident, because there is a difference in length between the two cases. In the first stanza it is longer than in the second. Why? Because in the first stanza it has length *by position* as well as by its own vowel sound. It ends

with a consonant itself, and stands before another word which begins with one. I argue therefore that close attention to natural quantity is an indispensable condition of good metrical writing, notwithstanding that quantity is not the principle on which it is constructed.

In a language so full of consonantal sound as the English, however, it is impossible to carry this attention so far as to fulfil the rules of Greek and Latin, in quantity by position. The little word *and*, even when standing before a vowel, the words *of* and *if*, when coming as they so often must before consonants, and many similar cases, show the impracticability of carrying attention to quantity to that length. But in theory there is no objection whatever to carrying it to the greatest extent possible; the principle of the versification remains thereby intact, and the farther it can be carried the more stable and comprehensive will that principle be shown to be.

Attention to the natural quantity of vowel sounds is always within our reach, and is a distinguishing mark of good versification. Take Mr. Tennyson's verses *In the Valley of Caunteretz*. The normal structure is of six stresses to the line, but this is overridden in three cases, lines 2, 8, and 10. At the same time not a syllable is "slurred;" indeed

the distinct way in which short unstressed syllables contribute to the rhythm, *e.g.* *was as* in line 8, constitutes one of its marked beauties :

“ All along the valley, stream that flashest white,  
Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the night,  
All along the valley, where thy waters flow,  
I walk'd with one I loved two and thirty years ago.  
All along the valley while I walk'd to-day,  
The two and thirty years were a mist that rolls away ;  
For all along the valley, down thy rocky bed  
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,  
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,  
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.”

In all the various metres which we have now examined, it will be evident, I think, that the immense variety of effect produced is derived solely from the different ways of handling one and the same principle, that of responsive or recurring stress, which is the animating principle of English verse ; though it also permits and even, as it were, engrafts on itself, the further purpose of satisfying the sense of quantity, as a counsel of perfection. In doing this, however, it does not make or introduce *feet* into the verse ; if it did it could only be to unmake them again. Feet can be used in scanning English measures, only on the theory that quantity and not stress is the vital principle of the verse. Then we should



have a set of rigid metres, to which a language which moves by stress would have to conform. Metre would then give law to poetry, instead of poetry to metre.

It is in vain to say that the laws of quantified metre may be so expounded as not to fetter the movements of the language. The movements of the heavenly bodies may, I believe, be expressed by cycles and epicycles and other terms of the Ptolemaic astronomy; but this cannot prove the Ptolemaic astronomy to be the true one. So in verse, the quantifying critics may enlarge, as it were, their boundaries, and even go the length of dividing, with Edgar Allan Poe,\* the duration of one "long" syllable into no less than six parts, so as to make "short" syllables of five different degrees of shortness, the longest less than a "long" syllable. Yet this does not and cannot show that quantity is the principle of English verse. It shows only that the quantifying theory finds some real principle efficiently at work in English verse, to the results of which it must accommodate itself, as the Ptolemaic system to those of the real principle of gravitation. This has always been the case from the beginning. James I., who is a most strict regularist, in his *Essayes of a Prentise*

\* In his Essay on *The Rationale of Verse*.

in the *Divine Art of Poesy*,\* knows nothing of *anapæsts*. Metres which employ what were afterwards called anapæsts he calls *tumbling* metres, and admits only alternate long and short syllables into metre proper. Even Poe is satisfied with six,—spondee, trochee, iambus, anapæst, dactyl, and cæsure (or long syllable). Mr. Ruskin we have seen has trine-anapæst and trine-dactyl, probably because he remembered lines like Campbell's in the *Battle of the Baltic*,

“‘Hearts of oak!’ our captain cried; when each gun,” &c. which he would be called upon to scan. So he adds his epicycle and scans them accordingly.†

Of course I am not saying that Englishmen cannot compose in metres based on quantity. No doubt they can, just as they can write in a foreign language. What I maintain is, that such metres are alien to English versification, in the same sense as foreign grammar is to English speech. Adopting them prevents the art being what all art ought to be, a conscious and voluntary movement upon the same lines as the artist's nature moves upon spontaneously and instinctively.

\* Published in 1586. He must have been at the time a young man of twenty. See the work in Mr. Arber's *English Reprints*, vol. viii.

† *Elements*, &c. p. 19.

The law of stress is thus an organic law, such a law as we should expect a living organism to work by, a law of movement inherent in the movement itself, and accounting, not only for the normal forms which it assumes, but also for the exceptional deviations in which it transcends and overrides them. Not as in the quantifying theory of verse, which lays down a rule and imposes a form from without, and then has recourse to the fiction of "poetic license," which cannot be explained itself, to explain the deviations; a license or lawlessness, causeless and irrational, like the notion which some Scholastics have of free-will.

Assuming, then, henceforward that the law of stress is the vital and ruling principle of English verse, we have next to see how the guiding takes place, and what dictates the difference of handling, which results, as we have seen, in difference of metres. In two cases, indeed, *Locksley Hall* and *The Raven*, we have already seen that it is the rhetorical or poetical emphasis which lays hold of the metrical stress, and thereby contributes to frame a new metrical structure. We are now to see it not only helping to frame the metrical structure in a more marked and important manner than before, but also giving to that structure a new character, invest-

ing it with an imaginative and poetical atmosphere, over and above the final metrical change. Not that this may not also be learnt from the instances already quoted, but that I have abstained from drawing that lesson from them. Quoting them for one purpose does not imply, that they might not have been quoted equally well for another.

## V.

It is emphasis that is the soul of verse, and breathes life into the metrical structure. In order to see what means are at its command for this purpose, we must go back to the analysis of the elements of spoken sound with which we began. These are duration, pitch, colour, loudness. All these may *prima facie* be used for the purposes of emphasis or expression; but it must be remembered, that they are the less available for those purposes, the more they have been drawn upon for the mere construction of the metre. In English we shall find that duration, which as a natural element is far more fixed than pitch, in all articulate speech, and a particular modification of colour, which I shall henceforward

exclusively call *tone*, are the principal sources of expression.

The term *expression* may be taken as including both a high and low degree of emphasis; in poetry it is the use of heightened and lowered emphasis to convey emotional and imaginative meaning. This emphasis is a new mode of stress; and stress we have seen is the combination of colour and loudness. The new mode of stress therefore is a particular modification of the colour which is natural and peculiar to the sounds themselves; it is that added colour or *tone* given to any sound by emotion. Hitherto the terms colour and tone have been used synonymously. But now I introduce a distinction by noticing this peculiarity due to emotion; and the native colour of any sound I shall now call its *colour* simply; the added or emotional colour I shall call its *tone*.

It is clear that tone is a great source of expression. It is clear also that duration is. It is not only a natural and comparatively fixed attribute of the words in a language, prior to versification, but it is modifiable at pleasure, and like colour it is of two kinds. Duration includes both pause and quantity; that is to say, we may lengthen or shorten, first, the intervals between syllables or words, and secondly,

the time taken by the syllables and words themselves. And it is clear that doing so contributes to purposes of emphasis.

It remains to consider pitch. This is not available in English for purposes of poetical expression. If it were available in English verse at all, it would have been employed in metrical construction as the modifier of quantity, and would have had a distinct notation of its own, so that each syllable would have had its own pitch, either fixed, or varying according to some law; and then raising or lowering the pitch beyond its usual limits would have been emphatic. But in English it cannot be used for emphasis, because it has no fixed home in English words.\* Where words of a high or low pitch are emphatic in English, they are so not because of this, but because they have a new *tone* in their sound. In the same way, changes in loudness may be emphatic, as in emphatic whispers; but here, too, it is rather as a different tone, than as a different degree of loudness, that the sound has its emphatic quality. So that we may fairly conclude, that tone and duration are the two chief, if not the only, sources of expression

\* "Laconically, *English accent may be defined as fixed force and free pitch.*" Mr. Alex. J. Ellis, in his paper *On the Physical Constituents of Accent and Emphasis*. Trans. of Philolog. Soc. for 1873-4, p. 123.

in English poetry, over and above the simple stress which issues in metrical modifications in the way we have already seen. But between tone and duration there are important differences to be noted.

In fact, colour (as distinct from tone) and duration in both its modes, pause and quantity, may be used by skilful artists to enhance the beauty and harmony of the verse, without in any degree calling in the aid of emotional expression. This latter can only be done by modifying the *tone*. Here is the really vital point at which poetic imagination, and that conjunction of emotional fire with intellectual power, which we call *genius*, make themselves felt. Then we hear Mr. Arnold's "lyrical cry;" which two words, I take it, are the most considerable contribution to the Theory of Style of late years in this country. And at this point, too, it is, that an analogous power in the reader, capable of being kindled by the poet's imagination, is requisite, and for want of which the higher poetry is a fountain sealed to so many; a power creative in the poet, but merely appreciative in the reader.

The use of pause and quantity has often been insisted on and developed by critics. So also, though not so fully, has that of colour. Dr. Guest gives a large space to the subject in the first Book of

his *History of English Rhythms*. And I nowhere remember to have seen more clearly stated, than by him, the rationale of the pleasure we derive from the sound being made, as it is called, an echo to the sense, which depends chiefly on the colour of sounds :

“If, as is often the case, besides the idea which the usage of language has connected with certain words, there are others which are naturally associated with the sounds or with the peculiarities of their formation, it is obvious, that the impression on the mind must be the most vivid, when the natural associations can be made to coincide with such as are merely artificial and conventional.”\*

The importance of colour, again, in the sounds of poetry is insisted on by Professor Sylvester, in his striking little work *The Laws of Verse*, and is there made the foundation of a sub-branch of poetic theory, to which he gives the name of *Chromatic*, distinguishing it from *Metric* on one side, and from *Synectic* on the other. And at one place he writes :

“There is quite as much room for the exposition of a method of distributing sound as of laying on colour” [in painting], “and indeed the analogy between the two arts of Versification and Coloring may be demonstrated to exist down to some very minute technical details.”†

This, though strongly stated, may for aught I

\* Work cited, vol. i. p. 11.

† *The Laws of Verse*, p. 44.



know be strictly correct. At any rate it is difficult to exaggerate the extreme importance of the effect of colour in sounds, and of the affinities and associations connecting them. But it must be remarked, that it not only goes no farther than the technical branch of the subject, but does not show how that technical branch, in its colour department, is connected with the higher art of poetry as distinct from the art of verse. It does not give the manner or point of their connection, does not indicate how the two are organically moulded into one. It does not touch the heart of the subject, any more than the laws of metre, or of pause and quantity, touch it.

The *emotional* colour, the *tone*, is that which, even supposing the perfection of art to have been attained, is not and cannot be given but by the magic touch of that inborn imaginative power, in virtue of which *nascitur non fit* is true of poets. Over and above art in all its forms, over and above the varied phases of power known as dramatic, lyric, descriptive, and so on, over and above insight and knowledge, loftiness of conception, and nobility of aim; over and above all other gifts, yet combining with all and interfused with all, is found this imaginative power (where it is found at all), giving life

and light and unity, and transforming the true into the ideal.

The question is, how and at what point is the organic fusion between verse and poetry effected ; how and by using what elements does the imagination of the poet take up, incorporate, and wield, the acquired skill of the artist. In part the answer is that which I have given ; it is by introducing *tone*. And it is as much the chief business of the appreciative reader to watch for and divine the presence of poetic tone, as it is that of the poet to indicate, by the structure of his verse, where and in what intensity it is present. Not that it is the whole or anything like the whole of imagination, nor even that it sums up its various ways of working ; but it is the point at which imaginative working and technical working coincide, and in which they both have a part ; that point at which the secret mental working of imagination comes, as it were, to the surface, and is embodied in words which can be fixed on by the reader, and dwelt on again and again, and thus afford the inefaceable evidence of its presence. That is why it is the highest point attainable in a study of *verse*, which is the technical part of poetry.

The imaginative words or sounds conveying emotion are indicated, so far as I can see, in one way

only, though it is a way susceptible of great variety. It is by selecting one or more among the words which have the metrical stress, and making the rhetorical or emphatic stress fall on them, choosing for that purpose words the colour of which is modifiable by emphasis into an emotional tone; as for instance, the deep tone on the word *war* in these lines from Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* :

“And 'mid that tumult Kubla heard from far  
Ancestral voices prophesying war.”

By this imaginative use of the sound *war*, in conjunction with the other circumstances of the prophecy, the mysterious infinity of its foreboded terrors is brought home to the mind. There it is that the emotional element comes in, which interprets the significance of all the rest.

The metre requires the verse to be read in a certain way, variable within certain limits; the rhetorical (which includes the logical) emphasis requires the sentence, written in the verse, to be read in a certain way; and these two conditions, foreseen and combined by one who has a dominant feeling to express, result in the moulding of a verse which has a higher than rhythmical or harmonic beauty alone, a higher than rhetorical beauty alone, being a combination of metre, harmony, emotion, and imagery.

Thus, for instance, in Lear's magnificent outburst :

" I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness ;  
I never gave you kingdom, called you children,  
You owe me no subscription.

\* \* \*

But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters join'd  
Your high engendr'd battles 'gainst a head  
So old and white as this."

It would be a great mistake, in my opinion, to read this passage with the emphasis, say, on *elements* in the first line, or on *you* and *you* in the second line. On the contrary, the whole efficacy of the first *you* and of *unkindness* in the first line, of *kingdom*, *children*, and *subscription* in the second and third, are drawn upon to express Lear's impassioned indignation at his daughter's ingratitude. The emotion, the logic, the rhetoric, the metre, coincide in emphasizing the words indicated.

Sometimes repetition is the means employed to fix the emphasis, as in Dante's

" *Guardami ben : ben son, ben son Beatrice,*"

though the precise force of the repetition is apparently missed by Mr. Rossetti when he translates,

" Behold, even I, even I am Beatrice."\*

\* *Poems* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti, p. 84.

The point spoken to is not whether the person present *or some one else*, but whether the person present is *or is not* Beatrice. Compare Cordelia's passionate affirmation,

“And so I am, I am.”\*

The necessity of attending to both metrical and rhetorical stress, and to their combination, is shown by the hopeless confusion wrought by neglecting it, as in one of the few bad lines in Pope, the famous

“Man never is, but always to be blest.”

The rhythm of this line is desperate, and why? Because the words which in order to support the antithesis ought to be emphatic, *to be*, are words which cannot receive the emphatic stress. *To*, being a mere part of the infinitive mood, cannot have it. Neither can *be* have it, though it might have it, so far as metre alone goes; because that would either attribute to *to be* the meaning of a verb substantive, not an auxiliary, and then the antithesis is exhausted before we come to the word *blest*, and when we do come to it we find that the antithesis exhausted is not the antithesis intended by the poet; or else we go on without pause to the word *blest*, reading together *to be blest*, and then we find that a reality in the blessings is suggested, though future, and

\* *King Lear*, act iv. sc. 7.

that is the very thing intended to be denied. To remedy this it would have been necessary to insert the word *blest* after *is* ;—man never *is blest* but always *is to be blest* ;—which alone brings out the antithesis between being blest actually and blest prospectively. The epigram, so far from satisfying the mind, leaves it struggling in a labyrinth of confusion.

Of course it must not be imagined for a moment, that poets, when writing, use and apply *by way of rule* the rule of combining the emotional with the rhetorical and the metrical stress. They use it not as rule but as a principle. Their proceeding is, I imagine, something of this kind ; they dwell on their subject-matter, the content of imagery which they want to express, and allow it to fall into rhythmical phrases which the habit of composing causes to present themselves spontaneously, according to the laws of association. These phrases they control and select from, by reference to their more or less complete harmonising with the content of images and the emotions pervading them, and with the musical flow of the verse. They do not say, Where shall I put the emotional stress ? But they keep rejecting spontaneously offered metrical phrases, until one arises which has the emotional stress rightly placed to their ear and sensibility. The result is positive,

but the method in which the emotional stress operates in attaining it is negative, by rejecting the less satisfactory metrical phrases. From this comes the impossibility in many, or rather in most, cases, of pointing out single words upon which the emotional stress falls. For, though emotion and the purpose of expressing it have governed and moulded the structure of the verse, yet their influence is, as it were, distributed over the whole, not concentrated in particular words. Every part must harmonise with the emotion to be expressed, and there must be no stress wrongly laid, that is, in such a way as to interfere with that desired expression.

As an instance of what I mean, none perhaps can better serve than Coleridge's lines entitled *Constancy to an Ideal Object*. They are one of the most musically rhythmical poems in the language, and the dominant emotion expressed is unmistakable throughout, a brooding and resigned despair; yet there are few single words or phrases of which we can say, *here* is where the emotional stress comes in. The lines are few and may be cited in their entirety:

“Since all that beat about in Nature’s range  
Or veer or vanish, why shouldst thou remain  
The only constant in a world of change,  
O yearning thought! that liv’st but in the brain?”

Call to the hours, that in the distance play,  
The faery people of the future day—  
Fond thought !—not one of all that shining swarm  
Will breathe on thee with life-enkindling breath,  
Till when, like strangers shelt'ring from a storm,  
Hope and Despair meet in the porch of Death !  
Yet still thou haunt'st me ; and though well I see,  
She is not thou, and only thou art she,  
Still, still as though some dear embodied good,  
Some living love before my eyes there stood,  
With answering look a ready ear to lend,  
I mourn to thee and say—' Ah ! loveliest friend !  
That this the meed of all my toils might be,  
To have a home, an English home, and thee !'  
Vain repetition ! Home and Thou are one.  
The peacefull'st cot the moon shall shine upon,  
Lull'd by the thrush and waken'd by the lark,  
Without thee were but a becalmed bark,  
Whose helmsman on an ocean waste and wide  
Sits mute and pale his mouldering helm beside.  
And art thou nothing ? Such thou art, as when  
The woodman winding westward up the glen  
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze  
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glist'ning haze,  
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,  
An image with a glory round its head ;  
The enamour'd rustic worships its fair hues,  
Nor knows he makes the shadow he pursues !"

Now what I mean to observe is, that, although we can frequently here trace many an emphatic word,—emotionally emphatic,—yet the stress on these is not so strongly marked in comparison with



the rest, as to justify us in saying, *there* is the home and seat of the poetry. Every word, every phrase, every transition, is informed and animated by it also; and so are the flow and music of the lines one and all. There is but one expression in the whole which is not thus transfigured; it is one little expression in the first line, before the poetic fire had fully kindled. This is to me, though I may be wrong, the one blemish in this otherwise faultless gem of profoundly imaginative poetry.

It is interesting and instructive to compare with this Shelley's well known lines on a kindred motive, entitled *Stanzas*, with the date April 1814, beginning

“Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon.”

Here, the emotion works changes in the metrical structure, by varying the number, position, and importance of the stresses, as in some of the cases examined under the head of metre. The skeleton of the metre is formed by lines of six stresses, falling into two members, and disposed in quatrains, the lines rhyming alternately. The first line varies this structure by having only two stresses in its first member. And the most remarkable of the other variations are, that two other lines have four stresses in the first member; these lines being the last of

the fourth and the last of the fifth quatrain, lines which have matter of reflection and comparison to express, and therefore move with a slower and lengthier tread. In all the rest, the number of the metrical stresses is not altered, but many of them are partially overridden, I need hardly remark with what signal beauty in the result, by the guiding principle of poetic emotion. The frequent use of alliteration, too, both in these lines and those of Coleridge, should not pass unobserved. Alliteration did not cease to be pleasing to the English ear by ceasing to be the structural principle of English metre. But by all good stylists it is used as it ought to be, not indeed sparingly, but unobtrusively, and as an aid to the distribution of the emotional stress. To use it to enforce the metrical stress, or even the logical stress, alone, is an abuse, and tends to make the verse a jingle.

So also in that portion of Mr. Tennyson's *Maud*, which may be called the poetical climax of the whole, I mean that portion which begins :

“O that 'twere possible  
After long grief and pain  
To find the arms of my true love  
Round me once again !”

The structural law of the metre changes, in these

lines, under the influence of the emotion; the rhythm changes under the poetry. The first line is to be read slowly, with every syllable plainly expressed, but with a strong stress and long duration on the first syllable of *possible*. The *ss* sound in that word is itself a sigh. The second line also slowly, with all the words but *and* emphatic. This leads up to the third line of four distinct stresses separated by single unstressed syllables, showing the vividness of the desired imagery. And the fourth line, of three distinct stresses, is expressive of completion, as if nothing after *that* were needed.

Yet one more instance before quitting this part of the subject, poetic emphasis modifying and moulding the metre. It is from Mr. Morris's noble poem of *Sigurd*. Historically, I imagine, the metre of this poem is a descendant of the Iambic Tetrameter, and the so-called ballad metre; formed from it by dropping the fourth stress, which we may see can easily be done from such lines as the first and second (taken together) of the stanza quoted above from *The Prophecy of Capys*. It thus assumes in Mr. Morris's hands a structure of quite distinct character, even in his ordinary use of it. It becomes a rhyming couplet of *six* metrical stresses to the line:

“ Know thóu, most míghty of mén, that the Nórus shall  
     órder áll,  
 And yét withóut thy hélping shall no whít of their  
     will befáll.”

That is the ordinary structure, the skeleton of the metre, so to speak. It is itself the creature of poetic emphasis. But what I want particularly to notice is a further modification of it, by the same agency, in the more impassioned passages, where deep emotion is to be expressed. The six stresses of the line are now changed to four :

“ O Sígurd, O my Sígurd, what nów shall give me báck  
     One wórd of thy loving-kindness from the tángle and  
     the wráck ?”

Nothing, I think, can show more clearly than this the *sameness* of the principle which runs through the whole structure of English verse and the whole history of its development. Essentially the present case is identical with Milton's change of rhythm by dropping a syllable, in :

“ Oft on a plat of rising ground,  
     I hear the far-off Curfew sound,  
     *Over some wide-water'd shore,*  
     *Swinging slow with sullen roar.*”

And with Shelley's dropping not a syllable only, but a stress, in :

"What, if there no friends will greet ;  
 What, if there no heart will meet  
 His with love's impatient beat ;  
 Wander wheresoe'er he may,  
 Can he dream before that day  
*To find refuge from distress*  
 In friendship's smile, in love's caress ?"

I know not by what laws of inversion or license regularists can satisfactorily account for such changes as these. What is the structure to which the poets are supposed to be conforming by these changes, and what is their motive for so conforming to it? What *dictated* to Shelley to put three stresses only into the line italicised ?

## VI.

But perhaps after all, the glory of English, as a language subservient to the purposes of poetical imagination, is not where it employs but where it transcends the use of rhyme, in the metre known as Blank Verse, the skeleton of which consists of lines of five stresses. As a vehicle of poetry this metre is unsurpassed, and almost unrivalled ; but it is shown to be so only because it has been handled and made

what it is by writers of consummate genius. Without Marlowe, without Shakspeare, and most of all without Milton, the capacity of English as a poetic medium would never have been displayed. Marlowe, not the first to use it, holds in respect to it an analogous position to that which Catullus holds in Latin, with respect to the Latin Hexameter. The full volume and torrent of his verse prepared the way, and exhibited the force, which were afterwards to be followed and applied in the varied dramatic usage of Shakspeare, and the majestic harmonies of Milton; just as Virgil's sonorous and stately flow was preluded and prepared by the impetuous volume of Catullus:

“ *O nimis optato sæclorum tempore nati*  
*Heroes, salvete, Deûm genus ! O bona mater !*  
*Vos ego sæpe meo vos carmine compellabo.*”  
                                   \*                                   \*                                   \*

And as to Marlowe, take that famous passage on the power of Beauty,\* of which I transcribe the beginning:

“—What is beauty, saith my sufferings, then?  
 If all the pens that ever poets held  
 Had fed the feeling of their masters' thoughts,  
 And every sweetness that inspir'd their hearts,  
 Their minds and muses on admired themes;  
 If all the heavenly quintessence they still

\* First Part of *Tamburlaine*, act v. sc. 2.

From their immortal flowers of poesy,  
 Wherein, as in a mirror, we perceive  
 The highest reaches of a human wit ;  
 If these had made one poem's period,  
 And all combin'd in beauty's worthiness,  
 Yet should there hover in their restless heads,  
 One thought, one grace, one wonder, at the least,  
 Which into words no virtue can digest."

\*                    \*                    \*

It was almost inevitable, as we can now see after the event, that the line of five stresses, that is, a line not so long as to be necessarily broken up into two lines, and yet not too short to admit of serious and weighty matter being expressed in it ; a line, too, of an *uneven* number of stresses, so that the position of its dividing break was easily variable ; should be that in which the fetters of rhyme were thrown aside, the lines put together in paragraphs whose length depended not on the metre but on the meaning, and the whole trust placed, for beauty and poetic emphasis, not on the metre as defined by rule, but on the variations of pause and quantity, and on the introduction of emotional tone governing those variations.

These are the characteristics of blank verse ; and it is clear that in some sort it is a return to the system of Old English versification, like Cædmon's, as Dr. Guest points out ; but it is on a far higher level,

having rhyme, and all that was to be learnt from its use, no longer ahead of it but behind it, as a fulcrum and foundation. The use of quantity, so far as it was compatible with the genius of English, now replaced the definite metrical beats, which rhyme had been employed to accentuate. The stressed syllables, upon which the *tone* was to fall, were now indicated by pause and quantity, and by the position of the dividing break in each line. Rhyme was a guide no longer.

But that which is the glory of blank verse, as a vehicle of poetry, is also its danger and its difficulty. Its freedom from the fetters of rhyme, the infinite variability of the metrical structure of its lines, the absence of couplets and stanzas,—all assimilate it to prose. It is the easiest of all conceivable metres to write; it is the hardest to write well. Its metrical requirements are next to nothing; its poetical requirements are infinite. It was Byron, I believe, who remarked, that it differed from other metres in this, that whereas they required a certain proportion of lines, some more, some less, to be good, in blank verse *every* line must be good. Now in what does this goodness consist? Or, in other words, how is poetry in blank verse distinguished from poetry in rhythmical prose?



The answer depends on what has been already said. The introduction of the emotional tone, in this case in combination with the middle break, with pause, with quantity, is that which gives its metrical character to blank verse ; I mean, is that which makes it *metre* and not merely measured prose. It is something not so much superinduced upon an underlying metre, as a prior condition of its being metre at all. It *makes* and does not merely employ the verse. There is indeed a skeleton of metre below it ; there are the five stresses and middle break which go to a line ; but these without the poetic tone make lines which are not “ good ” in Byron’s phrase ; in fact, they make measured bits of prose. Thus blank verse, the glory of English, is not so much the instrument as the creature of poetry.

If this be so, it is futile to talk of rules for the construction of blank verse, such rules, I mean, as to the position of the middle break, the places of the stress, the places where an “ iambus ” may be replaced by a “ trochee ” or a “ tribrach,” an “ anapæst ” or a “ dactyl,” how many unstressed syllables are admissible between the stressed ones, or whether two stressed syllables may come together. Of course they may, if the meaning and the ear demand it. How else are we to scan the well known line,

“Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears ;”  
 or was Shakspeare not writing blank verse here ? Yet  
 what are the *feet* in it ? Is *Friends* a foot ? Is  
*Romans* a foot ? Or is *Friends Ro* one foot, and  
*mans coun* another ? Is there a metrical stress on  
*men* and *me* ? And if not, is it because a “trochee”  
 is admissible in the fourth place, and a “pyrrhic”  
 (shall we call it) in the third ?

But let us take an instance from Milton :

“Regions they pass’d, the mighty regencies  
 Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones  
 In their triple degrees ; regions to which  
 All thy dominion, Adam, is no more  
 Than what this garden is to all the earth,” &c.

*Paradise Lost*, V. 748.

The line which in this passage threatens to approach  
 prose is

“In their triple degrees ; regions to which.”

Why is this, and what saves it ? My account of it  
 is this. The first member of the line is intended to  
 be read slowly, and with a pause after *degrees*, to  
 make up in quantity for its diminished weight. It  
 should be read with syllables of equal but slight  
 stress, the stress being distributed equally over all.  
 The intention of the poet, I apprehend, is to mark  
 the words as an explanation, thrown in by the way,

of the previous magnificent and emphatic lines to which it serves as a foil,—

“the mighty regencies  
Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones.”

Slightly different is the motive of the rhythm in another case, which is otherwise somewhat similar :

“So both ascend  
In the visions of God : It was a hill  
Of Paradise the highest,” &c.

*Paradise Lost*, XI. 376.

Pause after *God*. But there is a stress on the first syllable of *visions* and on *God* ; not an equal distribution as in the former instance ; but still not such a stress as to shorten either *In* or the last syllable of *visions*. In both cases there is slow reading of the first member of the line, and a pause after it. The two emphatic stresses in the present case convey, as it was no doubt intended they should, the impression of mystery and solemnity.

Again, to take a case where repetition is employed :

“In his own image he  
Created thee, in the image of God  
Express, and thou becam’st a living soul.”

*Paradise Lost*, VII. 526.

Pause after *thee*, where the line divides. Pause

again after *the*. Then emphatic stress and long quantity on the first syllable of *image*.

There is a passage beautiful and famous, and containing a line the scanning of which has been much discussed :

“’Tis true, I am that Spirit unfortunate  
Who, leagu’d with millions more in rash revolt,  
Kept not my happy station, but was driv’n  
With them from bliss to the bottomless Deep.”

*Paradise Regained*, I. 358.

The pause and emphasis in the first line need not here be pointed out. It is the last line that is the metrical *crux*. We have a similar ending again in

“Eternal wrath  
Burn’d after them to the bottomless pit.”

*Paradise Lost*, VI. 865.

Pause in both cases after the division of the line. Then another shorter pause after *the*. Then strong and emphatic stress on the first syllable of *bottomless*, and a slight one on *Deep*, or *pit*. The first pause calls attention to what follows. The second, slighter, pause keeps us hovering on the brink ; the emphatic stress gives the *infinity* of the fall.

Now my contention is, that in these cases the poetry makes the metre, and does not find it ready made. It finds a skeleton which it clothes and animates ; and not till that is done is there metre at all,

but only prose. Those who scan blank verse by feet must conceive it to be made metrical by its own laws of structure, previous to its use by the poet, just as most rhyming metres practically are. But then they are hard put to it to show how such lines as those cited conform to the metrical laws which they lay down.

This view is nothing more than the development of principles learnt from Coleridge and more particularly, in application to Milton's verse, from De Quincey. And though those two critics are not much acknowledged in unmethodical England (though I suspect they are often plundered without acknowledgment), all the more is the need that some one should endeavour, however feebly, to hand on their torch, and say who lighted it.

It was Milton's classically trained ear and familiarity with Greek and Latin poetry that enabled him, though it would not have enabled any one not endowed with Milton's sensibility, to make the glorious poetical and metrical use which he did, in his great poem, of quantity and pause. This use he carried still farther in his *Paradise Regained*, a poem of marvellous ease, smoothness, and regularity in the ordinary flow of its verse, and in which the skill of the artist seems to have reached its acme. But there

are lines occasionally (not frequently) interspersed, in which the poet seems to be delighting in his skill as a metrist for its own sake, using his fine perception of quantity to frame lines, the irregularity of which is not justified by the emotional tone, and thus overstepping the limits within which the use made of pause and quantity is recommended to an English ear. I refer to such lines as :

“ Whom thus answer'd the Arch-Fiend, now undisguis'd”

Book I. 357.

“ Little suspicious to any King ; but now”

Book II. 82.

“ After forty days fasting had remain'd”

Book II. 243.

“ And with these words his temptation pursu'd”

Book II. 405.

In lines like these Milton seems to me to be taking pleasure in playing upon the newly discovered capacities of his instrument, and making that artistic pleasure his principal end. Which may go far to explain, what seems otherwise almost inexplicable, the higher admiration which Milton himself is said to have entertained for the later compared with the earlier of his two great poems. And certainly, if we look at the language alone, apart from the poetical value of the meaning conveyed, no verse can be more perfect. It is a medium of utter lucidity and trans-

parency, conveying the minutest flexions of the thought, without distorting or for an instant arresting them; so that, except for such lines as those I have mentioned, it is for the moment self-effaced in performing the office of a vehicle, and we perceive that it is beautiful only on recurring to it and reflecting on it. Partly, too, I imagine, Milton's preference may be explained by his satisfaction with the logical neatness of the conception which *Paradise Regained* embodies, namely, that as "by the disobedience of one" Paradise was lost, so precisely "by the obedience of one," under a similar temptation, it was (virtually) regained.

It is not the amount of liberties or poetic license, so called, which may be taken with the metre, that determines our judgment as to the beauty of the verse. It is rather the purpose sought and attained, by a free metrical handling, that is decisive. Justified by poetic purpose, hardly any so-called license is inadmissible, either in dealing with stresses, or in dealing with the middle break. As to stresses, we have a line of four equally emphatic stresses, overriding the five of the "skeleton," with the happiest effect, in

"Passion and apathy, and glory and shame."

*Paradise Lost*, II. 564.

We have a line of six half-stresses and two emphatic ones, in the famous line of monosyllables,

“Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of  
death.” *Paradise Lost*, II. 621.

The six half-stresses are on the six first words ; the two emphatic ones on *shades* and *death*.

Again, in the matter of the middle break. All but invariably we trace, in every line, a point up to which the line seems to rise, and after which it falls, with an undulating motion like a wave, inseparable from the ocean on which it heaves and swells. The second member corresponds to and satisfies the expectation roused by the first. The place where this break occurs varies, in Milton, with the meaning conveyed by the verse. The usual places are either after the word containing the second, or after that containing the third stress, as for instance, after the word containing the second stress, in the majestic line,

“Warring in Heaven against Heaven’s matchless King.”  
*Paradise Lost*, IV. 41.

But these places are not invariable. We have it after the word containing the first stress in the line,

“O Father ! gracious was that word which clos’d”  
*Paradise Lost*, III. 144.



We have it again in the same Book after the word containing the fourth stress, in

“Found out for mankind under wrath ! O Thou”

*Paradise Lost*, III. 275.

and,

“No sooner had the Almighty ceas’d, but all”

*Paradise Lost*, III. 344.

And sometimes we find it obliterated altogether, as in the transcendent words

“Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,”

*Paradise Lost*, III. 373.

a line in which the middle break is gone, and instead of it the line falls into three portions depending on three emphatic stresses, yet loses not its unity, but moves forward, as it were, with one irresistible and level sweep.

## VII.

It will possibly be worth while, now that our brief survey of English verse rhymed and unrhymed is completed, to see whether we can get any light from the principles employed in it, upon what have been called *experiments*, or the reproduction of Greek and Latin metres in English. This is at any rate an attempt to enrich and enlarge the field of English

verse, and from the use made of the principle of balanced quantity by Milton and others might seem to promise much success.

Now there are various ways in which Greek and Latin metres may be made the foundation of English verse, which verse may therefore in various degrees deserve the title of a reproduction of them. First, they may be used to take hints from, as regards rhythm and flow, so as to introduce new forms into English verse, which nevertheless remains unmistakably English, so that it would seem as natural and native a growth of English organisms as any in the language, to people unacquainted with its foreign source.

Secondly, the rhythm in which an Englishman *reads*, not that in which he *scans*, Greek and Latin metres may be directly imitated, substituting stress not for quantity but for accent, as in Southey's *Sapphics* :

“ Swift through the sky the vessel of the Suras  
Sails up the fields of ether like an Angel.  
Rich is the freight, O Vessel, that thou bearest,  
Beauty and virtue.” &c.

Thirdly, the rhythm in which Greek and Latin metres are scanned may be reproduced, but without attending to the laws of Greek and Latin quantity by

position, and substituting stress for long quantity. This is the way in which so-called English Hexameters and other forms of verse, such as Sapphics and Hendecasyllabics, are commonly written, as by Coleridge, by Charles Lamb in his Hendecasyllabics, by Longfellow in his *Evangeline*, by Clough in his *Bothie* and *Amours de Voyage*, and by Mr. Swinburne in his Sapphics and Hendecasyllabics, though Mr. Swinburne's come very closely indeed to the strict metre of the next class.

Fourthly, a close observance of the laws of Greek and Latin quantity by position may be added to the imitations belonging to the third head, whereby both English stress and Greek and Latin quantity by position are preserved, with the result of producing the closest resemblance to the original metres possible to languages which replace quantity and accent by stress.

In recent times it is Mr. Tennyson who has led the way with experiments of this fourth and strict kind, in his *Alcaics on Milton*, and his *Catullian Hendecasyllabics*. But the most elaborate attempt to carry out the principle has been made by Mr. Robinson Ellis in his *Poems of Catullus*, in which the whole of Catullus is reproduced in English verse, in the metres of the original, imitated in this strict way of observing at once the laws of quantity by

position and of the English stress. It is certainly a remarkable attempt, and adds new brightness to the laurels which its author has won by his learned critical edition and commentary on the great poet whom he translates ;

“Nec satis est veterum quod vatum ænigmata solvat,  
Ille etiam numeros exprimit arte pari.”\*

It may be freely admitted that it is a far harder task to translate a Greek or Latin author into the metres of the original with the laws of the prosody strictly interpreted, than to write original verses in the same metres and with the same strictness. In the latter case you can at need make what you have to say bend to the necessities of the verse in which you say it, and, if your primary object is to write not a poem but a specimen of metre, that object may be fully attained. But this cannot be done in translating ; for there the meaning of your author is as strongly imperative as any meaning of your own could be, and cannot be postponed to metrical necessities. Catullus, too, is a poet whose beauties are so closely interwoven with his words, and whose words are so pregnant and often also so difficult of interpre-

\* From the *Peplum Italiæ* of Giov. Matteo Toscano. Said of Parrasio. See the passage quoted, and the circumstances, in Signor Fiorentino's work, *Bernardino Telesio*, vol. i. p. 37.

tation, that hardly any skill in translation, in whatever mode, whether strict or not strict, would be adequate to give a faithful impression of him. Mr. Ellis, therefore, has imposed on himself a peculiarly arduous task.

The special dangers which attend the resolve to combine the strict rules of Latin prosody with those of English are mainly three; first, there is the danger of sacrificing the meaning of the original, or at least its clearness, to the necessities of Latin prosody; secondly of sacrificing the English laws of stress, and thirdly the English idiom, to the same necessities. We have an instance of the first, when Mr. Ellis, in the fifth line of the *Attis*, writes *humanity*, when the sense of the original requires *virility*, apparently because it would interfere with the Latin prosody by making the preceding word *his* long by position. An instance of the second is found in the tenth line of Poem LXXVI.:

“Therefore cease, nor still bleed agoniz’d any more.”

In *bleed agoniz’d* English prosody is sacrificed to Latin. If *agoniz’d bleed* had been written, the Latin prosody would have been sacrificed to the English. The eleventh line of the *Peleus and Thetis* is an instance of the third danger:

“That first sailer of all burst ever on Amphitrite;” meaning that this was the first ship that ever sailed the sea. This meaning moreover is clear in the Latin, but the loss of the English idiom makes us puzzle over it for a moment or two in the translation.

Cases like the two last are far from uncommon in Mr. Ellis's work. They are in my opinion sufficient to show, what on other grounds we should expect, that the fourth or strict way of handling Greek and Latin metres in English is a wrong track; its difficulties are too great to be surmountable, especially in translations, for poems of any considerable length. The construction of the metre becomes the principal care of the writer, and that is fatal to it as metre. For the merit of a metre consists in its offering a mode in which poetical thought can be spontaneously expressed, a channel in which it will run not merely with ease, but with added vivacity. But the adoption of foreign rules of prosody, especially when based on principles so totally different, is like the adoption of a foreign language in its effect upon the freedom and power of the composition.

Mr. Ellis is perhaps at his best in the *Attis*; a quotation from which will be of interest as enabling us to compare his strict mode of treatment with that

which we have already seen adopted by Mr. Tennyson in his *Boëdicea*, which falls under the first of my four heads. Let us take the concluding passage, where Cybele has let loose one of the lions from her chariot upon the unhappy Attis, and cuts off his meditated escape :

“So in ire she spake, adjusting disunitedly then her yoke.  
 At his own rebuke the lion doth his heart to a fury  
     spur,  
 With a step, a roar, a bursting unarrested of any brake.  
 But anear the foamy places when he came, to the frothy  
     beach,  
 When he saw the sexless Attis by the seas’ level opaline,  
 Then he rushed upon him ; affrighted to the wintery  
     wood he flew,  
 Cybele’s for aye, for all years, in her order a votaress.  
 Holy deity, great Cybele, holy lady Dindymene,  
 Be to me afar for ever that inordinate agony.  
 O another hound to madness, O another hurry to rage !”

Hendecasyllabics offer fewer difficulties in English, inasmuch as their rhythm in Latin is simpler ; a trochaic rhythm, with a dactyl in the second place. Written in the loose way, the third of those I have described, they are a very favourite metre in English. The dactyl in the second place is then not preserved, nor are the strict rules of quantity by position attended to. Mr. Swinburne is an exception. He

preserves the dactyl in the second place, but even he does not always adhere to strict quantity by position. Nothing of course can dispense with the necessity of striving after smoothness of flow, whether we attend to Latin prosody or not. And written on these principles it is often hard to draw the line between verses of this kind, written in my third way, and verses written in my first way, that is, merely founded on or suggested by the Latin metre, not aiming at reproducing it. Coleridge's lines, which are, I believe, a free translation from the German, beginning

“Hear, my beloved, an old Milesian story !—”

and Charles Lamb's beautiful and pathetic lines with the refrain

“All, all are gone, the old familiar faces,”

are perhaps to be classed as reproduction ; while such lines as the following, of Mr. Matthew Arnold's, being wrought into stanzas and otherwise modified, seem to be instances of suggestion only :

“Raise the light, my page, that I may see her.—  
 Thou art come at last then, haughty Queen !  
 Long I've waited, long I've fought my fever :  
 Late thou comest, cruel thou hast been.”

There can, I think, be no doubt that the first



way of dealing with Greek and Latin metres, that of using them as hints for the improvement and development of genuinely English verse, governed by the principle of stress, is perfectly legitimate and extremely valuable. But the third way, or way of loose imitation and adoption of foreign metres themselves, has also much to be said for it, and besides shades off by fine degrees into the first method. Take for instance Clough's beautiful elegiacs in his *Amours de Voyage*. The poet is addressing his song as a vessel, and inviting it to Italy :

“Over the great windy waters, and over the clear-crested  
summits ;

Unto the sun and the sky, and unto the perfecter  
earth,

Come, let us go,—to a land wherein gods of the old  
time wandered,

Where every breath even now changes to ether  
divine.

Come, let us go ; though withal a voice whisper, ‘The  
world that we live in,

Whithersoever we turn, still is the same narrow crib ;

’Tis but to prove limitation, and measure a cord, that  
we travel ;

Let who would ’scape and be free go to his chamber  
and think ;

’Tis but to change idle fancies for memories wilfully  
falser ;

’Tis but to go and have been.’—Come, little bark !  
let us go.”

The metre of the pentameter is not strictly adhered to in the second line; the insertion of the second *and* spoils it as a strict pentameter, but is no injury at all to it considered as an English rhythm, but rather an improvement. The first line is very instructive. *Great windy* and *clear-crested* are in the place of dactyls. They are totally unconformable to Latin prosody. Yet they are chief points of poetical beauty in the line; and why? Because the strong stress on *great* and on *clear* weakens without destroying the stress on *windy* and on *crested*, so that we have variety of stress introduced into the verse, without sacrificing the perception of its metrical structure, which, if allowed to remain unmodified, would have forbidden any stress on the two last syllables of a dactyl, and would have made the line approach a jingle.

The great danger attending composition in this third way of loose imitation lies in allowing the metrical structure to be too prominent, from which a monotonous jingle must result. But why is this difficulty inseparable from this mode of composition? The question leads us into the heart of the subject. It is because, the metre being strange and unfamiliar, we have to *use up the emphatic stress in constructing the skeleton of the metre*, and so have

nothing to draw upon for the further purposes of variety and poetical beauty. I do not say that this difficulty is wholly insuperable. Clough's verses just criticised show that it is not. But the more we rely upon the emphatic stress for the mere structure and explanation of the metre, that metre being a fixed and regular one, with marked recurrences, (which limitation distinguishes this case from that of blank verse,) the less we have it at disposal for varying the monotony of its cadence. It is a difficulty which may well be overcome by poetic genius, for in itself it is a difficulty in the management of English stress and tone, not one in Greek or Latin prosody, notwithstanding that indirectly it is caused to arise by attempting the imitation of Greek and Latin models.

Turning to the first and most indisputably legitimate method of dealing with Greek and Latin metres, I do not know whether I am right in conjecturing that the elegiac rhythm may have suggested to Mr. Swinburne the beautiful verse in which his *Hesperia* is written :

“ Out of the golden remote wild west where the sea without shore is,  
Full of the sunset, and sad, if at all, with the fullness of joy,

As a wind sets in with the autumn that blows from the  
 region of stories,  
 Blows with a perfume of songs and of memories  
 beloved from a boy," &c.

Mr. Tennyson's lines, too, entitled *The Higher Pantheism*, though in rhymed couplets, and with a syllable cut off at the end, stand very near hexameters :

"Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He  
 seems?"

Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in  
 dreams?"

The English ear seems to catch naturally and easily the flow and rhythm of the Hexameter, and easily also to vary it with alternating lines which recall the Pentameter. Every one, I think, would recognise the striking spontaneity, ease, and force in Coleridge's *Hymn to the Earth*, and also in the opening lines of Southey's *Vision of Judgment*. Mr. Walt Whitman, too, who is anything but a classicist, is continually falling into rhythms which irresistibly recall the flow now of the Hexameter and now of the Pentameter.

Another instance in which an English metre has been suggested by a Latin or Greek one is found in Mr. Tennyson's beautiful lines *To F. D. Maurice*. These are plainly based on the Alcaic stanza; and I cannot but think that this, and not the strict Alcaics

used in the address to Milton, is the true shape of the Alcaic stanza in English :

“For groves of pine on either hand,  
To break the blast of winter, stand ;  
And further on, the hoary Channel  
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand.”

Perfect metrically and perfect musically as the Alcaics on Milton are, never will an English ear, in my opinion, get rid of the clinging sense of artificiality in their structure. The Latin Alcaic requires as much translating into an English metre, as its Latin words require translating into the English language. And that is in my opinion the true way of dealing with the classical models ;—translate their metre as well as their sense ; translate, not transfer ; imitate, not mimic ; produce an analogous, not a copied verse.

The same may be said of the Greek choric metres. Milton led the way here, in his *Samson Agonistes* :

“Go, and the Holy One  
Of Israel be thy guide  
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name  
Great among the Heathen round.” &c.

And in recent times we have instances of both ways of handling from Mr. Matthew Arnold. The anapaests in his *Fragment of an Antigone* are certainly more than merely suggested by the Greek metre :

“ No, no, old men, Creon I curse not.  
     I weep, Thebans,  
 One than Creon crueller far.  
 For he, he, at least, by slaying her,  
 August laws doth mightily vindicate :  
 But thou, too-bold, headstrong, pitiless,  
 Ah me !—honourest more than thy lover,  
     O Antigone,  
 A dead, ignorant, thankless corpse.”

In the other kind we have that exquisite little poem  
*The Strayed Reveller*, from which the first volume  
 of verse published by Mr. Arnold derived its title,  
 and in which we find, for instance, lines like these :

“ They see the Heroes  
     Sitting in the dark ship  
     On the foamless, long-heaving,  
         Violet sea :  
 At sunset nearing  
 The Happy Islands.  
 These things, Ulysses,  
 The wise Bards also  
 Behold and sing.  
 But oh, what labour !  
     O Prince, what pain !”

## VIII.

BUT it is time to draw to a conclusion by bring-  
 ing our results together in a briefer and somewhat  
 more tangible form. We have seen the organic cha-

racter of poetic theory, and how every part of it stands in mutual connection and interdependence with the rest. The genius of a language, we have seen, contributes to determine the structure of its metres, and these in turn are the mould in which its poetry must be cast, but not without themselves undergoing modification from the poetry to which they serve as vehicle. The sounds of the language, the metrical structure of the verse, and the poetic thought and feeling which are the matter and content of both, are in constant action and re-action on one another. The content of the verse, the poetic thought and feeling conveyed by it, are the head and heart of the whole; theirs is the life-blood which pulses in its veins.

The theory of poetry is organic because the poetry itself is so. Just as thought and emotion are inseparable elements of the content, just as the imagery of poetry is poetic because it contains these two elements always distinguishable but never separate, so the verse and the language are poetic because they are made the inseparable vehicle of the imagery. In every poem, therefore, the problem for the critic is to distinguish these three elements, and to assign to each its own contribution in producing the effect of the whole. Criticism is in this way

*analysis*; its foundation, the ground upon which its canons are established, consists in the analysis of poetry into the essential elements of its composition; and these elements in the last resort are three;—first, the imagery or content, consisting of thought and feeling in combination, secondly the metre, thirdly the sounds. And the modes in which these are combined in particular poems, and the skill with which they are combined, more or less successfully, for the purpose of poetical beauty, are the chief object of critical judgments.

The whole art may accordingly be considered under three heads, and brought under what I will venture to call *The Three Concords* of poetry:

- I. The Concord between images and images (always including emotion as well as thought).
- II. The Concord between images and metre.
- III. The Concord between images and sound.

I. The First Concord embraces the whole content of poetry, the thought and purpose of poems as wholes. It forms the chief part of what is the usual subject-matter of criticism. It would carry us far beyond the range of the present paper, which deals only with Verse, to enter upon the vast field which general poetical criticism offers. We should have to



transcend technical limits altogether. The foregoing Essay on *The Supernatural in English Poetry* is an essay in this branch of the subject. Here it can only be indicated, and its existence pre-supposed, as the necessary foundation of all poetic art, and its Concord as the complement of the two following and dependent ones.

II. The Concord between images and metre. This consists in the subordination of the metre to the thought and feeling to be conveyed, and in the choice and variation of it, so as to suit them and enforce them. We have a notable instance of this in the change of metre in Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*. That poem begins with lines of four stresses. Then the description proceeds with rhyming lines of five stresses; and then returns to lines of four, ending with a couplet of five-stressed lines, repeating and enforcing the picture of the dome :

“ It was a miracle of rare device,  
A sunny pleasure dome with caves of ice !”

Then the metre changes back to the four-stressed line, much varied in point of stress, and sometimes accentuated by alliteration, introducing a totally new turn in the vision :

“ A damsel with a dulcimer  
In a vision once I saw,” &c.

That change of metre corresponds to the shifting of scene in the dream imagery, heralds it, gives it vividness, and invests it with solemnity. And the connection of the two scenes is then shown to lie in the strains, heard from the dulcimer and the song, being such as one might imagine fitted to evoke the dome of pleasure from the earth, and cause it to rise and build itself by a magic creation. The change of metre at the words,

“ A damsel with a dulcimer,”

is an instance of the concord of images and metre.

Another instance may be found in the mariners’ song in Mr. Browning’s *Paracelsus* :

“ Over the sea our galleys went,  
With cleaving prows in order brave,  
To a speeding wind and a bounding wave,  
A gallant armament.”

The change in the third line by the introduction of two unstressed syllables in two places, before *speeding* and *bounding*, gives life and rapidity to the motion which the two first lines picture as vigorous and steady. And then the closing with a line of three stresses restores the original impression, and enriches it with the added notion of security.

It may be remarked here, in anticipation of the third Concord, that the sound of the word *bounding*

is imitative and expressive as an echo to the sense. We seem to *see* the action the sound describes. The word has the same effect elsewhere, as in Wordsworth's lines :

“Like roebucks they went bounding o’er the hills,  
They played like two young ravens on the crags,”

where the emphasis is made to fall on *bounding* in the first line, and on *ravens* in the second. And again, in Clough's

“O bounding breeze, O rushing seas !  
At last, at last, unite them there !”

A striking instance of the second Concord is found in Mr. Browning's *Andrea del Sarto* :

“But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,  
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,  
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird  
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—  
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind !”

“And the low voice my *soul* hears,”—there is the instance I mean. Three things here combine ; (1) the word *soul* is emphatic by the meaning ; (2) it is emphatic by the metre ; (3) it is not only emphatic by the meaning, but it is *imaginative*. The soul does not hear the *voice* but the *significance* of the voice. The voice is made to *live* for us by the expression that the *soul* hears it. Personal emo-

tion is conveyed by an image enforced by the aid of metre.

We have a very similar instance of the use of metre enforcing a pathetic word in Wordsworth's *Excursion* :

“Ah ! what a warning for a thoughtless man,  
 Could field or grove, could any spot of earth,  
 Show to his eye an image of the pangs  
 Which it hath witnessed ; render back an echo  
 Of the sad steps by which it hath been trod.”

Book VI.

There is a pause in the second line at *grove* ; then the thought is resumed and renewed by the repetition of the word *could* ; then there is emphatic stress on *any*. The universality of the case is thus brought home to us. The last line also is imaginative ; the echo is an echo, not of the steps merely, but of their sadness.

The refrain in Spenser's *Epithalamion* has already been quoted for another purpose ; but it is also a signal instance of the second Concord. The line remains the same throughout in its essential feature, though it has many slight variations, as

“That all the woods may answer, and your eccho ring,”  
 and

“The woods shall to me answer, and my eccho ring.”  
 An imitation of echo is here produced by the mode

of transition between the two members of the verse, which is an Alexandrine. The last syllable of *answer* is carried on into the second member, and the break in the line makes a pause after that word, a pause of expectation; the echo effect depends on the second member responding to the pause by two light unstressed syllables, *and your; and my*. Had it responded to the last syllable of *answer*, after the pause, with a weighty or stressed syllable, there would have been no imitation. As it is, the sound grows louder and more distinct towards the end of the line, by the stressed words, *eccho ring*. There is not only a fainter sound, there is a *responsive* sound in the echo.

Observe the very different effect in Mr. Tennyson's beautiful echo song in *The Princess* :

“Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,—  
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.”

There is here no imitation of *response*. True we *know* that it is a response, but the *sense* of response is not there; it is a series of fainter repetitions;

“O sweet and far from cliff and scar,  
The horns of Elf-land faintly blowing!”

Under this Concord also may be classed, as an effect of metre, those repetitions of words and phrases,

with variations upon them, of which Edgar Poe makes such frequent and also such strikingly beautiful use. For instance, the concluding stanza from his *Ulalume* :

“Then my heart it grew ashen and sober  
 As the leaves that were crisped and sere—  
 As the leaves that were withering and sere,  
 And I cried—‘It was surely October  
 On *this* very night of last year  
 That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—  
 That I brought a dread burden down here—  
 On this night of all nights in the year,  
 Ah, what demon has tempted me here?  
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—  
 This misty mid region of Weir—  
 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,  
 This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.”

Poe was by no means the first to use this device; but he has made it his own by the skill of his handling, and by its due subordination to the emotional element in the poetry. We have an instance of it in Lessing's little poem *Die Schlafende Laura* (vol. i. p. 57 of Lachmann's edition). But I do not think his handling can compare with Edgar Poe's.

“Sie schlief, und weit und breit  
 Erschallten keine Nachtigallen,  
 Aus weiser Furchtsamkeit,  
 Ihr minder zu gefallen,  
 Als ihr der Schlaf gefiel,

Als ihr der Traum gefiel,  
 Den sie vielleicht itzt träumte,  
 Von dem, ich hoff' es, träumte,  
 Der staunend bei ihr stand,  
 Und viel zu viel empfand,  
 Um deutlich zu empfinden,  
 Um noch es zu empfinden,  
 Wie viel er da empfand." &c. &c. &c.

In another way repetition may be employed for emphasis. Landor's well known stanzas are a striking instance of great beauty :

" Ah what avails the sceptred race,  
 Ah, what the form divine !  
 What every beauty, every grace !  
 Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes  
 May weep, but never see,  
 A night of memories and of sighs  
 I consecrate to thee."

III. The Concord between images and sound. The nature and importance of this concord may perhaps be best indicated by referring to Edgar Poe's use of the word *Nevermore*, as a refrain, in his *Raven*, and his explanation of his own procedure in the paper entitled the *Philosophy of Composition*. All vowels have a musical resonance of their own ; and this may be varied indefinitely, both by their multiplication, and by their combination with con-

sonantal sounds, liquid and rolling, or close and hard. Consider, for instance, the variety of tone which may be introduced by preachers into the word *Lord*, chiefly by varying the number of *o*'s in it, according to the degree of culture which they suppose in their audience. A cultured audience will be satisfied with two at the utmost ; few are so uncultured as to endure six.

The short *i* sound conjoined with *t* and *k* sounds is imitative of smallness. Thus in Mr. Tennyson's lines, to indicate the smallness of the beginnings of a ruin afterwards to spread :

“The little rift within the lover's lute,  
Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit.”

*S* sounds are usually soft, and in conjunction with liquids, that is, with *l*, *m*, *n*, *r* sounds, lend themselves to imitations of musical smoothness. As in Mr. Matthew Arnold's exquisite couplet, describing a liquid voice :

“Say, has some wet bird-haunted English lawn  
Lent it the music of its trees at dawn?”

We have already seen the metrical character of Scott's couplet :

“For down came the Templars, like Cedron in flood,  
And dyed their long lances in Saracen blood.”



It is also an instance of *d* alliteration ; and besides this, the *d* which closes each line is imitative of grim resolution, when sounded with the tongue pressed hard against the teeth.

The softness and stillness of *s* sounds is shown in Pope's famous couplet :

“Lo ! where Mæotis sleeps, and hardly flows  
The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows.”

*The Dunciad*, Book VIII. 8.

If it is permissible to take instances from Latin, we may find in Catullus two of the softest lines ever written, and the effect principally owing to the use of *s* :

“*Ut flos in septis secretus nascitur hortis*,”

*Carm.* LXII. v. 39.

and :

“*Crannonisque domos ac moenia Larissæa*,”

*Carm.* LXIV. v. 36.

There is a beautiful little poem contributed to the Dublin University *Kottabos*, vol. i. No. 4, under the signature B., entitled *Sustinet Œnonen deseruisse Paris*. It is a translation from the English of the late Professor Aytoun. Great use is made both of colour and tone in this little poem ; for instance, the sighing sound of the emphatic antepenultimate syllable of *inhospita*, in the stanza :

*“Illum lingue, precor, navis, inhospita  
Terra ; lingue, precor, nullus ubi virum  
Pes signarit arenas  
Flavas, fluctibus uvidas.”*

In the stanza before this, which is the opening one, we have a similar use made of the melancholy sound of *ng* in certain combinations :

*“Navis, Priamidem per freta quæ volas  
Nobis abripiens perfida perfidum,  
Qua sola æquora plangunt,  
Illum desere in insula !”*

*Plangunt* is imitative of the melancholy sound of waves. Again we have this same combination, only with *g* soft, in a similar connection, in Mr. Tennyson's stanza :

*“A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand,  
Left on the shore ; that hears all night  
The plunging seas draw backward from the land  
Their moon-led waters white.”*

*N* sounds readily lend themselves to melancholy effects, whether alone or in combination. Greek is full of them, occurring frequently with long vowels, as in plural genitives. We may thus often discover such effects in Greek verse, though we cannot be sure that they were sought or consciously retained by the poet for the sake of the effect. For instance,

in the *Odyssey*, Book XIII. v. 187-9, where Ulysses awakes on the coast of Ithaca :

ὁ δ' ἔγρετο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς  
εὖδων ἐν γαίῃ πατρώϊῃ, οὐδέ μιν ἔγνω,  
ἤδη δ' ἦν ἀπεών.

Or again, in Pindar, Isthmian IV. 50 sqq., where the *n* sound seems to dominate the whole of an epode, being prepared by the concluding line of the preceding antistrophe :

τῶν ἀπειράτων γὰρ ἄγνωστοι σιωπαί.

Ep. ἔστιν δ' ἀφάνεια τύχης καὶ μαρναμένων  
πρὶν τέλος ἄκρον ἰκέσθαι.  
τῶν τε γὰρ καὶ τῶν δίδοι.  
καὶ κρέσσον' ἀνδρῶν χειρόνων  
ἔσφαλε τέχνη καταμάρψαις. ἴστε μὰν Λῆαντος  
[ἀλκὰν φοίνιον, τὰν ὕψις  
ἐν νυκτὶ ταμῶν περὶ ᾧ φασγάνῳ, μομφὰν ἔχει  
[παίδεσσιν Ἑλλάνων, ὅσοι Τρῳάανδ' ἔβαν.

where I should be sorry indeed to assert that the effect was not distinctly intended by the poet.

Consider finally not only the *n* and *nd* sounds, but the various other felicities which may be traced in the following stanza from Wordsworth, which comes from that touching poem in which he commemorates his brother poets who had died before him, though he was not the youngest of the band :

“ Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,  
Or waves that own no curbing hand,  
How fast has brother followed brother,  
From sunshine to the sunless land !”

Note here, besides the *n* and *nd* sounds, first the long vowel sounds in metrically emphatic places in the first verse, *clouds* and *rake*; then the short *i* with *ts* in *summits*, carrying us up to the heights themselves; a word like *moorlands*, as in the first line of the poem, would here be intolerable; then again the long vowel sound in *waves* in the second line; then the repetition of the same word in emphatic places, “*brother* followed *brother*,” giving the effect of waves; and finally the short evanishing sound *er* at the end of that repeated word, corresponding to the short *ts* sound in *summits*. But what is perhaps more than all these felicities in the verse is, that they are there apparently unsought by the poet, as an unconscious result of his deep emotion expressing itself by and through his faculty of verse, which had become spontaneously operative, a second nature.

“ Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is,”

says Shelley, in the well known lines *To the West Wind*. And so here Wordsworth has become the lyre of his own feeling, in the presence of the

thought of how he has seen member after member of his own poetic brotherhood pass away before him. It is a case similar in kind to that of Coleridge in creating his *Kubla Khan* ; but one inspired by more intense and personal feeling.

The foregoing instances will, I think, suffice to show the scope and value of what I have called the Second and Third Concords in poetry. The number of such instances might of course be indefinitely increased. Not but that clear and striking instances of these kinds will always bear a very small proportion to the whole mass of poetry in which they are found. Poetry does not consist of them, but occasionally blossoms out into them ; showing in them the nature of that harmony which subsists, though for the most part unobserved, between poetic thought and its embodiment of language. Their relatively small importance to the thought and feeling themselves, the real staple of poetry, which is the field of the First Concord, must never be lost sight of. And again, the clear and striking instances of happy metrical and tonal effects will be few for another reason, namely, because, thought and feeling being the staple of poetry, and the attention of the composer being chiefly fixed on these, his effort will be directed for the most part to removing hindrances to

their adequate expression, not to inventing means of heightening its effect.

These metrical and tonal modes of heightening the effect will accordingly be found mostly in comparatively short poems, which admit of a more elaborately artistic treatment, and have the beauty of gems, not of colossi. In a great poem such as the *Paradise Lost*, they become at once more frequent, being interwoven with the whole metrical structure of the poem, and less marked; so much less marked, indeed, that it would be difficult in most cases to point them out as indisputable instances of the Concords. And if this is true of Milton, who, if any man, is a great artist in words, to how much greater extent is it true of Shakspeare, intent, as a dramatic poet must be, upon the effect of the meaning, the action, and the situation, both upon the characters of the play, and upon the spectators, as contrasted with the effect of words written to be read as poems in private. Shakspeare has that same spontaneity which has been noted in Wordsworth and Coleridge, but it is a spontaneity more distinctly visible in the construction of the thought than of the language. It is not that he employs and conceals his art; but that, neglecting art, he is the greatest artist. Artist of thought and feeling; artist in the First Concord;

artist by the inspiration of nature and habit. He does spontaneously, and he does aright, the things prescribed by the Law of art.

Such is the relation of those felicities, which are clearly enough marked to be pointed to as indisputable instances of the second and third Concords, to those which form the staple of poetry, whether they belong to the first Concord solely, or whether they are less marked instances of language being happily used to convey thought and feeling. It is essential to poetry that language shall be its incarnation, or to use another image, that its thought and feeling shall be conveyed by language as by a smooth and transparent conduit.

This great purpose being secured, then those laws of metrical and tonal structure, which have secured it, may be used for the further purpose of heightening and enforcing the effect of the whole, by exhibiting themselves in the exercise of their function; just as, in architecture, it is the great features of the construction, the pillars, the buttresses, the corner towers, the arches of roof or window, that become subjects of ornament, and blossom out, as it were, into the frettings and mouldings of capital, cornice, or mullion, crocket, finial, or pinnacle. The beauties of sound and

tone and metre, beautiful as ornament, are also indications of the deeper and more essential service, which is performed by language simply as the vehicle and embodiment of poetic thought; a service which, but for its becoming visible as ornament, and thus attracting our attention on its own account, we might be in danger of underrating. The opposite error of supposing that mind, or thought, or feeling, exists solely by virtue, or for the sake, of language, is, I think, one into which, notwithstanding the dicta of some philologists, we are in small danger of falling.



VERSE TRANSLATIONS.



ΛΗΣΜΟΣΥΝΗΝ ΤΕ ΚΑΚΩΝ  
ΑΜΗΛΥΜΑ ΤΕ ΜΕΡΜΗΡΑΩΝ.

I.

LUCRETIUS. Book I. 1—43.

*The Exordium.*

MOTHER of Romans from Æneas sprung,  
 Venus benign, I thee invoke, who art  
 The joy of mortal and immortal hearts.  
 Thine all beneath the gliding stars of heaven,  
 The rolling sea shiptrack'd, the earth of fruits  
 Productive,—and their harmony is thine ;  
 And by thy power all creatures that have life  
 Are quicken'd and are born into the light.  
 Thee, Goddess, clouds abide not nor loud winds ;  
 Thou comest and they flee ; the dædal earth  
 Sweet flowers for thee upsends, broad ocean smiles,  
 And heaven shines forth in far spread light serene.  
 For when morn broadens o'er the earth in spring,  
 And soft life-breathing airs unfetter'd play,  
 First smitten by thy power the birds in song  
 Herald thy advent ; then the beasts arise  
 To range their forest pastures rich, and swim  
 Their streams though swift ; thus by thy charm enthrall'd,  
 And joy by thee inspir'd, all things that breathe,  
 Each in his nature, follow eagerly  
 The motions of thy will, where'er it leads.  
 Last, thou in sea, on mountain, and o'er plain,  
 Through leafy trees, strong rivers, and the tribes  
 That them inhabit, breathest soft desire,  
 Impelling each to multiply his kind.

T. LUCRETI CARL. DE RERUM NATURA,  
LIB. I. 1—43.

ÆNEADUM genetrix, hominum divomque voluptas,  
Alma Venus, cœli subter labentia signa  
Quæ mare navigerum, quæ terras frugiferentis  
Concelebras, per te quoniam genus omne animantum  
Concipitur visitque exortum lumina solis.  
Te, dea, te fugiunt venti, te nubila cœli  
Adventumque tuum, tibi suavis dædala tellus  
Summittit flores, tibi rident æquora ponti  
Placatumque nitet diffuso lumine cœlum.  
Nam simul ac species patefactast verna diei  
Et reserata viget genitabilis aura favoni,  
Aeriæ primum volucres te, diva, tuumque  
Significant initum percussæ corda tua vi.  
Inde feræ pecudes persultant pabula læta  
Et rapidos tranant amnis : ita capta lepore  
Te sequitur cupide quo quamque inducere pergis.  
Denique per maria ac montis fluviosque rapacis  
Frondiverasque domos avium camposque virentis  
Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem  
Efficis ut cupide generatim sæcla propagent.

O therefore thou, o'er nature's works supreme,  
Of all that rises to the realms of day  
Sole parent, and sole source of all delight,  
Thee would I fain associate with my song,  
While for our Memmius I essay to unfold  
The works of nature ;—him thou hast ever will'd  
To shine adorn'd with all accomplishment.  
Give then, O Goddess, to these words of mine  
Thy heavenly charm. Make the wild works of war  
O'er all the earth a little while be still.  
Thou, thou alone mankind with tranquil peace  
Canst bless ; since he who rules the works of war,  
Terrible Mars, leaps to thy circling arms,  
Himself by love's deep timeless wound subdued.  
There as he lies, with head turn'd back to gaze,  
And feeds his eyes with thy divinity,  
And hangs in breathless rapture on thy face,  
Thou leaning o'er him with thy sacred form,  
And bending low, let words of softest sound  
Flow from thy lips, and be our peace thy prayer.  
For neither I with mind at ease can write,  
In Rome's dark days, nor one of Memmian race  
Can e'er be wanting in his country's need.

1857—1864.

Quæ quoniam rerum naturam sola gubernas  
Nec sine te quicquam dias in luminis oras  
Exoritur neque fit lætum neque amabile quicquam,  
Te sociam studeo scribendis versibus esse  
Quos ego de rerum natura pangere conor  
Memmiadæ nostro quem tu, dea, tempore in omni  
Omnibus ornatum voluisti excellere rebus.  
Quo magis æternum da dictis, diva, leporem.  
Effice ut interea fera moenera militiæ  
Per maria ac terras omnis sopita quiescant.  
Nam tu sola potes tranquilla pace juvare  
Mortalis, quoniam belli fera moenera Mavors  
Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se  
Reicit æterno devictus vulnere amoris  
Atque ita suspiciens tereti cervice reposta  
Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, dea, visus,  
Equæ tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore.  
Hunc tu, diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto  
Circumfusa super, suavis ex ore loquellas  
Funde petens placidam Romanis, incluta, pacem.  
Nam neque nos agere hoc patriai tempore iniquo  
Possumus æquo animo nec Memmi clara propago  
Talibus in rebus communi desse saluti.

## II.

## HORACE. ODES III. 9.

*Donec gratus.*

*Horace.* WHEN I your smiles enjoying  
Alone that ivory neck caress'd,  
Nor dream'd a rival with you toying,  
No monarch liv'd than I more blest.

*Lydia.* When you admir'd no other,  
And Lydia first, not Chloe, came,  
The glory of Rome's royal mother  
Eclips'd not Lydia's lowly name.

*Horace.* Fair Chloe—sweetly playing  
And sweetly singing—hers am I ;  
To win for her death's brief delaying,  
Gladly I'd lay me down and die.

*Lydia.* For Calais now I'm sighing,  
And he returns me sigh for sigh ;  
And, would it save my love from dying,  
A thousand times I'd gladly die.

*Horace.* What, if the old love returning  
Firmer the parted pair unite,  
What, if thy friend, fair Chloe spurning,  
His Lydia open-arm'd invite ?



## II.

## HORACE. ODES III. 9.

*Horatius.* DONEC gratus eram tibi

Nec quisquam potior brachia candidæ  
Cervici juvenis dabat,  
Persarum vigui rege beatior.

*Lydia.* Donec non alia magis

Arsisti neque erat Lydia post Chloën,  
Multi Lydia nominis  
Romana vigui clarior Ilia.

*Horatius.* Me nunc Thressa Chloë regit,

Dulces docta modos et citharæ sciens,  
Pro qua non metuam mori,  
Si parcent animæ fata superstiti.

*Lydia.* Me torret face mutua

Thurini Calaïs filius Ornyti,  
Pro quo bis patiar mori,  
Si parcent puero fata superstiti.

*Horatius.* Quid, si prisca redit Venus

Diductosque jugo cogit æneō ;  
Si flava excutitur Chloë,  
Rejectæque patet janua Lydiæ ?

*Lydia.* Though he than day were brighter,  
And angrier thou than Hadria's sea,  
Than Hadria's drifted foam-flakes lighter,—  
With thee I'd live, I'd die with thee.

1863.

*Lydia.*    Quanquam sidere pulchrior  
              Ille est, tu levior cortice et improbo  
Iracundior Hadria,  
              Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens.

## III.

## HORACE. ODES I. 19.

*Mater sæva Cupidinum.*

Love's unrelenting mother,  
With Theban Semele's son combin'd,  
Kindling the fire of soft desire,  
Bids me to love give back my mind.

'Tis Glycera's dazzling beauty,  
That whiter skin of hers than snow,  
That playful grace, that witching face,  
Too fair for peace, that burns me so.

Venus, her Cyprus leaving,  
On me descends, inhabits here ;  
Of Parthian flight no more I write,  
Or battles,—antiquated gear.

Build me a turf-clad altar ;  
Wreaths, incense, bring ; the chalice set  
Brimming with pure old vintage ; sure,  
Due sacrifice will soothe her yet.

1863.

## III.

## HORACE. ODES I. 19.

MATER sæva Cupidinum  
Thebanæque jubet me Semeles puer  
Et lasciva Licentia  
Finitis animum reddere amoribus.

Urit me Glyceræ nitor  
Splendentis Pario marmore purius ;  
Urit grata protervitas  
Et voltus nimium lubricus adspici.

In me tota ruens Venus !  
Cyprum deseruit, nec patitur Scythas  
Et versis animosum equis  
Parthum dicere nec quæ nihil attinent.

Hic vivum mihi cæspitem, hic  
Verbenas, pueri, ponite, thuraque  
Bimi cum patera meri :  
Mactata veniet lenior hostia.

## IV.

## LUCRETIIUS. BOOK I. 80—101.

*The Sacrifice of Iphigenia.*

THIS then I fear, that you should deem yourself  
Listening to precepts of an impious reason,  
And setting foot upon a path of crime.  
And yet not seldom crimes, aye, impious crimes,  
Not reason but religion hath begot ;  
So once in Aulis, staining Trivia's altar,  
Iphigenia's blood was foully shed  
By men, the rulers and choice flower of Greece.  
She, when the fillet round her virgin locks  
Was bound, and falling shadow'd either cheek,  
Knowing her father in his grief was there,  
That 'twas for him the priests conceal'd their knife,  
And that the people wept at sight of her,  
Speechless with terror on her knees she sank ;—  
Unhappy—nought it steads her that the King  
First from her lips the name of father heard.  
But she was lifted by men's hands, and brought  
All trembling to the altar,—not to be,  
After the solemn sacrifice, led home  
With pealing bridal melody a bride,  
But, spotless victim of a spotted deed,  
And in the prime of marriageable years,  
Forlorn, by her own father's hand to die,—  
That fortunate the fleet and blest might sail.  
—So black a crime lies at religion's door.

1864.

## IV.

T. LUCRETI CARI. DE RERUM NATURA,

LIB. I. 80—101.

ILLUD in his rebus vereor, ne forte rearis  
Impia te rationis inire elementa viamque  
Indugredi sceleris. Quod contra sæpius illa  
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.  
Aulide quo pacto Triviai virginis aram  
Iphianassai turparunt sanguine foede  
Ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.  
Cui simul infula virgineos circumdata comptus  
Ex utraque pari malarum parte profusast,  
Et mœstum simul ante aras adstare parentem  
Sensit et hunc propter ferrum celare ministros  
Aspectuque suo lacrimas effundere civis,  
Muta metu terram genibus summissa petebat.  
Nec miseræ prodesse in tali tempore quibat  
Quod patrio princeps donarat nomine regem ;  
Nam sublata virum manibus tremibundaque ad aras  
Deductast, non ut sollemni more sacrorum  
Perfecto posset claro comitari Hymenæo,  
Sed casta incestu nubendi tempore in ipso  
Hostia concideret mactatu mœsta parentis,  
Exitus ut classi felix faustusque daretur.  
Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum.

## V.

## LUCRETIIUS. BOOK II. 1—16.

*Suave, mari magno.*

BRAVE sight it is, when winds the ocean plough,  
From shore to watch some labouring storm-toss'd bark,  
Not that another's suffering is our joy,  
But sweet our own security from ill.  
Sweet too to see, yet not the peril share,  
When armies meet on some great battle-field.—  
But sweeter far to keep the impregnable  
Calm towers of knowledge which the wise have rear'd,  
Lending broad verge to lands where wanderers stray,  
And lost in error seek the way of life,  
Contend in intellect, compete in fame,  
Spend days of restless toil and sleepless nights,  
To stand or first in wealth or first in power.

O mind of man how weak, and heart how blind !  
What darkness and what dangers compass round  
This life, whate'er it be !

1864.



## V.

T. LUCRETI CARI. DE RERUM NATURA,  
LIB. II. 1—16.

SUAVE, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,  
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem ;  
Non quia vexari quemquamst jucunda voluptas,  
Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia cernere suave est,  
Suave etiam belli certamina magna tueri  
Per campos instructa tua sine parte pericli.  
Sed nil dulcius est, bene quam munita tenere  
Edita doctrina sapientum templa serena,  
Despicere unde queas alios passimque videre  
Errare atque viam palantis quærere vitæ,  
Certare ingenio, contendere nobilitate,  
Noctes atque dies niti præstante labore  
Ad summas emergere opes rerumque potiri.  
O miserus hominum mentes, O pectora cæca !  
Qualibus in tenebris vitæ quantisque periclis  
Degitur hoc ævi quodcumquest !

## VI.

## CATULLUS. XXXI.

*Pæne insularum, Sirmio.*

## A PARAPHRASE.

DEAREST and best of wave-girt shores,  
Or isles where'er they be,  
Whether from liquid lakes they rise,  
Or from the sounding sea,  
Fair Sirmio, with what deep delight  
I now return to thee !

Scarce daring to believe I tread  
In very truth thy shore,  
Quit of Bithynia's fields, that shall  
By me be seen no more.

How sweet to cast off care,—  
And stay the weary mind,  
When, travel-worn, again the old  
Familiar home we find,  
And take on the remember'd bed  
The rest for which we pin'd.

Though this is all my toil hath gain'd  
Yet this the toil o'er pays ;  
Bid, Sirmio, bid me welcome back,  
Through all thy pleasant ways.

And you, ye waters of the lake,  
My Lydian lake, rejoice,  
And sweet home laughters, every one,  
Lift up again your voice.

## VI.

## CATULLUS. CARMEN XXXI.

PENE insularum, Sirmio, insularumque  
Ocelle, quascumque in liquentibus stagnis  
Marique vasto fert uterque Neptumnus ;  
Quam te libenter quamque lætus invisio,

Vix mi ipse credens Thuniam atque Bithunos  
Liquisse campos et videre te in tuto.

O quid solutis est beatius curis,  
Cum mens onus reponit, ac peregrino  
Labore fessi venimus Larem ad nostrum,  
Desideratoque acquiescimus lecto !

Hoc est quod unum est pro laboribus tantis.  
Salve, O venusta Sirmio, atque hero gaude ;  
Gaudete vosque O Lydiæ lacus undæ ;  
Ridete quicquid est domi cachinnorum.

## VII.

## ILIAD, Book VIII. 541—564.

*The Bivouac.*

THUS spake Hector, and all the Trojans shouted approval ;  
And from the chariot-poles they loos'd the foaming horses,  
And with the halters they bound them, every man by his chariot.  
Then with all speed they sent for oxen and sheep to the city ;  
Corn from the stores they fetch'd, and wine they bought of the  
merchants ;

Faggots of wood beside they gather'd in plenty for firing.  
Then to the Gods they made their due and perfect oblations,  
And the steam rose from earth and was wafted upward to heaven,  
Fragrant,—but thereof the blissful Gods partook not,  
Nor would have it, so deeply was sacred Troy abhorred,  
And Priam and the people of spear-renowned Priam.  
But they, proudly o'erlooking the field where battle had waver'd,  
Camp'd for the night, with many a watch-fire burning among them.  
And as when in heaven, around the moon in her brightness,  
Clear are the lustrous stars, and all the air is breathless,  
Seen are the mountain peaks and jutting promontories,  
Seen are the glens, and reveal'd are the solemn abysses of heaven,  
Every star can be told, and gladden'd at heart is the shepherd,—  
So, and so many, between the ships and the streams of Xanthus,  
Shone the Trojan fires in front of Ilion kindled.

Fires a thousand shone from end to end of the leaguer ;  
Fifty at each the men, that camp'd in the blaze of the firelight ;  
And their battle-steeds, that champ'd the white corn and the barley,  
Fast by the chariots stood, and awaited the splendours of morning.

## VII.

## ILIADOS LIB. VIII. 541—564.

“Ὡς Ἐκτωρ ἀγόρευ’. ἐπὶ δὲ Τρῶες κελάδησαν·  
 οἱ δ’ ἵππους μὲν λῦσαν ὑπὸ ζυγοῦ ἰδρώοντας,  
 δῆσαν δ’ ἰμάντεσσι παρ’ ἄρμασιν οἷσιν ἕκαστος·  
 ἕκ πόλιος δ’ ἄξαντο βόας καὶ ἴφια μῆλα  
 καρπαλίμως, οἶνον δὲ μελίφρονα οἰνίζοντο,  
 σῆτόν τ’ ἐκ μεγάρων, ἐπὶ δὲ ξύλα πολλὰ λέγοντο.  
 ἔρδον δ’ ἀθανάτοισι τελεέσσας ἐκατόμβας,  
 κνίσσῃν δ’ ἐκ πεδίου ἄνεμοι φέρον οὐρανὸν εἴσω  
 ἠδέϊαν· τῆς δ’ οὔτι θεοὶ μάκαρες दाτέοντο,  
 οὐδ’ ἔθελον· μάλα γάρ σφιν ἀπήχθετο Ἴλιος ἱρή,  
 καὶ Πρίαμος καὶ λαὸς εὐμμελίῳ Πριάμοιο.  
 οἱ δὲ μέγα φρονέοντες, ἐπὶ πτολέμοιο γεφύρῃ  
 εἶατο παννύχιοι· πυρὰ δὲ σφισι καίετο πολλά.  
 ὥς δ’, ὅτ’ ἐν οὐρανῷ ἄστρα φαεινὴν ἀμφὶ σελήνην  
 φαίνεται ἄριπρεπέα, ὅτε τ’ ἔπλετο νήνεμος αἰθὴρ,  
 ἕκ τ’ ἔφανεν πᾶσαι σκοπιαὶ καὶ πρόωνες ἄκροι  
 καὶ νάπαι, οὐρανόθεν δ’ ἄρ’ ὑπερρύαγῃ ἄσπετος αἰθὴρ,  
 πάντα δέ τ’ εἶδεται ἄστρα, γέγηθε δέ τε φρένα ποιμήν·  
 τύσσα μεσηγὺν νεῶν ἠδὲ Ξάνθοιο ῥοάων,  
 Τρώων καιόντων, πυρὰ φαίνετο Ἰλιόθι πρό.  
 χίλι’ ἄρ’ ἐν πεδίῳ πυρὰ καίετο· παρ δὲ ἐκάστω  
 εἶατο πεντήκοντα, σέλα πυρὸς αἰθομένοιο·  
 ἵπποι δὲ κρῖ λευκὸν ἔρεπτόμενοι καὶ ὀλύρας,  
 ἑσταότες παρ’ ὄχεσφιν, ἐϋθρονον Ἠῷ μίμνον.

## VIII.

## LINES ON A PET DOG.

Translated from an Inscription given in Mr. Robinson Ellis's larger edition of Catullus, from which it is here reprinted.

THE pet so dainty and so gentle dead !  
Nurs'd in her mistress' lap, and in her bed  
Nightly partaker of her sleep. O Fly,  
'Twas wrong, 'twas very wrong of you to die !  
A rival for your lady's favour too,  
For did one sit a little closer, you  
Would bark, a graceless libertine ! O Fly,  
'Twas wrong, 'twas very wrong of you to die !  
Now all unwitting you lie buried deep,  
Nor can show fight, nor on the knee can leap,  
No more you gleam on me with teeth that bite  
In gentle snatches, half of play, half spite.

1867.

## VIII.

INSCRIPTION IN THE MANNER OF  
CATULLUS

DISCOVERED ON A FRAGMENT OF MARBLE IN FRANCE.

Printed in Mr. Robinson Ellis's larger edition of Catullus, p. 303.

QUAM dulcis fuit ista, quam benigna,  
Quæ cum viveret in sinu jacebat  
Somni conscia semper et cubilis.  
O factum male, Myia, quod peristi.  
Latrare modo si quis adcubaret  
Rivalis dominæ licentiosa.  
O factum male, Myia, quod peristi.  
Altum jam tenet insciam sepulcrum  
Nec seuire potes nec insilire  
Nec blandis mihi morsibus renides.

## IX.

## HORACE. ODES III. 30.

*Exegi monumentum.*

MY record is more lasting than grav'd brass,  
And loftier than the regal pyramids,  
Safe from the touch of biting rain, beyond  
The blast's mad fury ; and unnumber'd years  
Shall in their flight sweep over it in vain.  
I shall not perish ; much will 'scape the tomb,  
And ever young my fame will grow with time,  
Long as the Pontifex and Silent Maid  
Shall go together up the Capitol.  
Of me 'twill run ' By sounding Aufidus,  
Where erst king Daunus in a thirsty land  
Sway'd a rude people, there, from low estate,  
Sprang the first master of Æolian song  
In native numbers.' Rise, Melpomene,  
Anticipate thy meed of glorious praise,  
And wreathe with Delphic bay thy poet's brow.

1868.



## IX.

## HORACE. ODES III. 30.

EXEGI monumentum ære perennius  
Regalique situ pyramidum altius,  
Quod non imber edax, non Aquilo impotens  
Possit diruere aut innumerabilis  
Annorum series et fuga temporum.  
Non omnis moriar multaue pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam : usque ego postera  
Crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium  
Scandet cum tacita Virgine Pontifex.  
Dicar, qua violens obstrepit Aufidus  
Et qua pauper aquæ Daunus agrestium  
Regnavit populorum, ex humili potens  
Princeps Æolium carmen ad Italos  
Deduxisse modos. Sume superbiam  
Quæsitam meritis et mihi Delphica  
Lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.

## X.

## HORACE. ODES I. 7.

*Laudabunt alii.*

GLORIOUS Rhodes will be hymn'd, and hymn'd Mitylene, by others,  
 Ephesus, Corinth's walls doubly belov'd of the sea,  
 Thebes for Iacchus fam'd, or Delphi fam'd for Apollo,  
 Tempe's beauty be hymn'd, Thessaly's valley profound.

Some will exalt the city of Pallas ever a maiden,  
 And the continuous tale still be a labour of love,  
 Olive still be their choice, the wide world o'er, for a garland.  
 Or in Juno's praise many of Argos will sing,

Argos trainer of steeds, or wealth of lordly Mycenæ.—  
 But I,—neither by thee, hardy Laconian land,  
 Nor so smitten am I by rich Larissa's meadows,  
 As by Albunea smit, deep in her resonant home,

Anio's headlong leap, Tiburnus' grove, and the orchards  
 Water'd with intricate streams, rivulets ever renew'd. [heavens,  
 Mark how the white south wind, when clouds have darken'd the  
 Clears the face of the sky, bidding a truce to the rain ;

So in thy wisdom, Plancus, omit not timely to banish  
 With wine, generous wine, troubles and toils of the day ;  
 Whether the camp thou inhabit alive with martial ensigns,  
 Or seek Tibur's shade, Tibur thy chosen retreat.

Thus from his father's face, from Salamis flying in exile,  
 Teucer crown'd, men say, brows which the grape had bedew'd,  
 Crown'd with poplar his brows, Herculean wreath, as his comrades,  
 So to dispel their gloom, cheerily thus he address'd :

## X.

## HORACE. ODES I. 7.

LAUDABUNT alii claram Rhodon aut Mitylenen

Aut Epheson bimarise Corinthi

Moenia vel Baccho Thebas vel Apolline Delphos

Insignes aut Thessala Tempe.

Sunt quibus unum opus est intactæ Palladis urbem

Carminibus perpetuo celebrare et

Undique decerptam fronti præponere olivam.

Plurimus in Junonis honorem

Aptum dicet equis Argos ditiesque Mycenæ.

Me nec tam patiens Lacedæmon

Nec tam Larissæ percussit campus opimæ,

Quam domus Albunæ resonantis

Et præceptis Anio ac Tiburni lucus et uda

Mobilibus pomaria rivis.

Albus ut obscuro deterget nubila cælo

Sæpe Notus neque parturit imbres

Perpetuos, sic tu sapiens finire memento

Tristitiam vitæque labores

Molli, Plance, mero, seu te fulgentia signis

Castra tenent seu densa tenebit

Tiburis umbra tui. Teucer Salamina patremque

Cum fugeret, tamen uda Lyæo

Tempora populea fertur vinxisse corona,

Sic tristes affatus amicos :

“Whithersoever our fate, more kind than a father, shall guide us,  
Thither, companions in arms, thither, my friends, we will go.  
Never, with Teucer for chief, with Teucer's star for an omen,  
Never despair. Not in vain surely Apollo hath said :

‘Lo ! in a land that is new, a new-born Salamis waits you.’

Hearts that often ere now perils have brav'd at my side  
Graver by far,—I pledge you. To-night be merry. To-morrow  
Speed once more our barks over the measureless sea.”

1875.

Quo nos cunque feret melior fortuna parente  
    Ibimus, o socii comitesque !  
Nil desperandum Teucro duce et auspice Teucro ;  
    Certus enim promisit Apollo,  
  
Ambiguam tellure nova Salamina futuram.  
    O fortes pejoraque passi  
Mecum sæpe viri, nunc vino pellite curas ;  
    Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.

## XI.

## HORACE. ODES II. 13.

*Ille et nefasto.*

UNHALLOW'D was the day, O Tree,  
Impious the hand, that planted thee,  
A bane to unborn generations,  
And to the village an infamy.

His father's neck, full well I ween,  
He must have wrung ;—his halls have seen  
The blood of guests at midnight murder'd ;  
Colchian poison his plaything been ;

Nay, crime, wherever born or bred,  
He dealt in, who in my homestead  
Set thee to fall, yes, doleful timber,  
Fall on thy innocent master's head.

The risks each hour may really bear  
What mortal knows ? One only care,  
The Bosporus, hath the Tyrian sailor,  
Careless of doom that may lurk elsewhere.

Soldiers one fear, the Parthian bow,  
Parthians but one, Rome's prisons, know ;  
But death still keeps, will keep for ever,  
Hidden the weapon that lays us low.

How nearly had the sight been mine  
Of thy dark kingdom, Proserpine,  
Of Æacus in judgment sitting,  
And the Elysian haunts divine.

## XI.

## HORACE. ODES II. 13.

ILLE et nefasto te posuit die,  
Quicumque primum, et sacrilega manu  
    Produxit, arbos, in nepotum  
    Perniciem opprobriumque pagi ;

Illum et parentis crediderim sui  
Fregisse cervicem et penétralia  
    Sparsisse nocturno cruore  
    Hospitis ; ille venena Colcha

Et quidquid usquam concipitur nefas  
Tractavit, agro qui statuit meo  
    Te, triste lignum, te caducum  
    In domini caput immerentis.

Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis  
Cautum est in horas : navita Bosporum  
    Poenus perhorrescit neque ultra  
    Cæca timet aliunde fata ;

Miles sagittas et celerem fugam  
Parthi, catenas Parthus et Italum  
    Robur ; sed improvisa leti  
    Vis rapuit rapietque gentes.

Quam pæne furvæ regna Proserpinæ  
Et judicantem vidimus Æacum  
    Sedesque discretas piorum et  
    Æoliis fidibus querentem

There Sappho in Æolian strains  
Still of her Lesbian maids complains ;  
    There sounds thy golden lyre, Alcæus,  
    Voyage and warfare and exile's pains.

The ghosts hang rapt, as either flings  
Lays worth such silence from the strings ;  
    But denser grows the throng that presses  
    Hungry for battles and doom of kings.

What marvel, when the hound of hell,  
The hundred-headed, at the spell,  
    Droops his black ears ; the charm'd snakes slumber,  
    Twin'd in the hair of the Furies fell ?

Yea, the great sire of Pelops' race,  
And even Prometheus, for a space  
    Forget their pains ; nor holds Orion  
    Lion or fugitive lynx in chace.

1875.



Sappho puellis de popularibus,  
Et te sonantem plenius aureo,  
    Alcæe, plectro dura navis,  
    Dura fugæ mala, dura belli!

Utrumque sacro digna silentio  
Mirantur Umbræ dicere ; sed magis  
    Pugnas et exactos tyrannos  
    Densum humeris bibit aure volgus.

Quid mirum, ubi illis carminibus stupens  
Demittit atras bellua centiceps  
    Aures et intorti capillis  
    Eumenidum recreantur angues ?

Quin et Prometheus et Pelopis parens  
Dulci laborum decipitur sono ;  
    Nec curat Orion leones  
    Aut timidos agitare lyncas.

## XII.

## HORACE. ODES I. 28.

*Te maris et terræ.*

(For the interpretation here adopted, see the *Excursus* on this Ode in Orelli's edition of Horace.)

## SAILOR

(*from his ship, passing in sight of the tomb of Archytas*).

THOU that couldst measure sea and land, Archytas,  
 Thou that couldst sum the innumerable sand,  
 Now by some handfuls of pil'd dust art prison'd,  
 Pent in thy course upon the Matine strand.

Where is the gain that thou hast scal'd the heavens,  
 Travers'd in spirit the vast dome of sky?  
 Death is thy lot.—Died too the sire of Pelops,  
 Feaster with Gods; Tithonus rais'd on high;

Minos who shar'd Jove's counsels; and in Orcus  
 Panthoides for evermore must stay,  
 Though once of old his trophied shield's removal  
 Prov'd that his soul had seen the Trojan day;

Only his flesh had yielded to corruption;  
 —Great master he of truth and nature's lore,—  
 Thou know'st it well.—But all death's night must enter,  
 Once the dark path must all alike explore.

Some make, by Furies rang'd in ranks of battle,  
 Sport for grim Mars. Some glut the greedy sea.  
 Death's door is throng'd by old and young together,  
 None the fell shears of Proserpine can flee.

## XII.

## HORACE. ODES I. 28.

## NAUTA.

TE maris et terræ numeroque carentis arenæ  
Mensorem cohibent, Archyta,  
Pulveris exigui prope litus parva Matinum  
Munera, nec quidquam tibi prodest

Aërias tentasse domos animoque rotundum  
Percurrisse polum morituro.

Occidit et Pelopis genitor, conviva deorum,  
Tithonusque remotus in auras,

Et Jovis arcanis Minos admissus, habentque  
Tartara Panthoiden iterum Orco  
Demissum, quamvis clipeo Trojana refixo  
Tempora testatus nihil ultra

Nervos atque cutem morti concesserat atræ,  
Judice te non sordidus auctor  
Naturæ verique. Sed omnes una manet nox,  
Et calcanda semel via leti.

Dant alios Furiae torvo spectacula Marti ;  
Exitio est avidum mare nautis ;  
Mixta senum ac juvenum densentur funera, nullum  
Sæva caput Proserpina fugit.

## GHOST

*(of a shipwrecked mariner, starting up from behind the tomb of Archytas).*

Me, too, the wind that waits Orion's setting  
    Whelm'd 'neath Illyrian waters with its blast.—  
O, be no churl, but o'er my bones unburied,  
    Sailor, of sand a little sprinkling cast.

So may the storms, with western waves contending,  
    Spare thee, howe'er Venusia's woods be rent ;  
So may rich gain to thee from Jove's high justice,  
    (Sure thence it can,) or from that God be sent,

Neptune, who guards Tarentum's sacred city.  
    What ! on thy guiltless children wilt thou call  
Lightly the curse of such a dereliction ?  
    Nay, even thee like judgment may befall,

Scorn pay for scorn. My vengeance shall pursue thee ;  
    Think not, repentance shall atone to me.  
Great though thy haste be, stay,—'tis but a moment ;  
    Dust by thy hand thrice sprinkled, thou art free.

1875.

## UMBRA.

Me quoque devexi rapidus comes Orionis.

Illyricis Notus obruit undis.

At tu, nauta, vagæ ne parce malignus arenæ

Ossibus et capiti inhumato

Particulam dare. Sic, quodcunque minabitur Euris

Fluctibus Hesperiiis, Venusinæ

Plectantur silvæ te sospite, multaue merces,

Unde potest, tibi defluat æquo

Ab Jove Neptunoque sacri custode Tarenti.

Negligis immeritis nocituram

Postmodo te natis fraudem committere? Fors et

Debita jura vicesque superbæ

Te maneant ipsum: precibus non linquar inultis,

Teque piacula nulla solvent.

Quamquam festinas, non est mora longa; licebit

Injecto ter pulvere curras.

## XIII.

## ANTHOLOGIA PALATINA. X. 123.

*πῶς τις ἄνευ θανάτου.*

How quit life's burden, yet not cease to live?  
Countless its ills, and hard to leave as bear.  
For sweet the natural sights it hath to give;  
Earth, ocean, stars, the sun, the moon, are fair;  
The rest is fear and moan. Joy, seiz'd in vain,  
Fleeting entails a Nemesis of pain.

1875.

## XIII.

## ANTHOLOGIA PALATINA. X. 123.

Πῶς τις ἄνευ θανάτου σε φύγοι βίε; μυρία γάρ σευ  
 λυγρά • καὶ οὔτε φυγεῖν εὐμαρὲς, οὔτε φέρειν.  
 Ἦδέα μὲν γάρ σου τὰ φύσει καλὰ, γαῖα, θάλασσα,  
 ἄστρο, σεληναίης κύκλα καὶ ἡελίου •  
 τ᾽ ἄλλα δὲ πάντα φόβοι τε καὶ ἄλγεα • κῆν τι πάθῃ τις  
 ἐσθλὸν, ἀμοιβαίην ἐκδέχεται Νέμεσιν.

## XIV.

## HORACE. ODES III. 13.

*O Fons Bandusiae.*

FOUNT of Bandusia, lucent spring,  
Thy due of wine and flowers we bring,  
And with the morn shall offer'd be  
A wanton youngling kid to thee.

Look how his arching forehead swells,  
And love and war alike foretells;  
In vain,—his life-blood freely shed  
Shall tinge thy cold clear wave with red.

Thee the fierce hour of dog-star heat  
Can touch not in thy cool retreat,  
Now sought by ranging flocks, and now  
By oxen resting from the plough.

Thou too a fountain fam'd shalt be,  
And men shall list thy praise from me,  
Thy cave, thy rocks, their ilex crown,  
Whence leap thy streamlets babbling down.



## XIV.

## HORACE. ODES III. 13.

O frons Bandusiæ, splendidior vitro,  
Dulci digne mero non sine floribus,  
Cras donaberis hædo,  
Cui frons turgida cornibus

Primis et venerem et prælia destinat.  
Frustra : nam gelidos inficiet tibi  
Rubro sanguine rivos  
Lascivi suboles gregis.

Te flagrantis atrox hora Caniculæ  
Nescit tangere, tu frigus amabile  
Fessis vomere tauris  
Præbes et pecori vago.

Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium,  
Me dicente cavis impositam ilicem  
Saxis, unde loquaces  
Lymphæ desiliunt tuæ.

## XV.

HORACE. ODES III. 26.

*Vixi puellis.*

I'VE liv'd devoted to the fair,  
Fought, too, with credit here and there ;  
Now shall my arms and lyre unstrung  
On Venus' temple-wall be hung.

Here on her left hand fix them high,  
Vow'd to the foam-sprung deity,  
The lever, the bright torch, the bow,  
For laying doors and warders low.

O Thou, whom Cyprus blest enthrones,  
And snowless, sun-bath'd, Memphis owns,  
Give but—with lifted lash—one touch  
To Chloe, scornful overmuch.

1877.

## XV.

## HORACE. ODES III. 26.

Vixi puellis nuper idoneus  
Et militavi non sine gloria ;  
Nunc arma defunctumque bello  
Barbiton hic paries habebit,

Lævum marinæ qui Veneris latus  
Custodit. Hîc hîc ponite lucida  
Funalia et vectes et arcus  
Oppositis foribus minaces.

O quæ beatam diva tenes Cyprum et  
Memphin carentem Sithonia nive,  
Regina, sublimi flagello  
Tange Chloën semel arrogantem.

## XVI.

## FROM THE HOMERIC HYMN TO HERMES.

LINES 447—455.

## APOLLO TO HERMES

*(who has been playing to him on the tortoise-shell lyre for the first time).*

“WHAT art, what skill, is thine? What Muse bestows  
This charm for desperate ills? Distinct its power,  
Three gifts indissolubly link'd in one,  
Heart-merriment, love-longing, slumberous calm.  
For I, even I, am of the Muses' train,  
Daughters of heaven. They rule the choir, when song  
Makes itself paths of splendour, they the dance  
Exultant speed, to pipes or flutes that roll  
Their quick delicious thunder on the ear,  
Doings right welcome at the feasts of youth.  
But strains that touch, like thine, the heart within  
Till now have I heard never.—Child of Jove,  
I marvel at the rapture of thy lyre.”

1879—1880.

## XVI.

Εἰς Ἑρμῆν. νν. 447-455.

Τίς τέχνη; τίς Μοῦσα ἀμηχανέων μελεδώνων;  
τίς τρίβος; ἀτρεκέως γὰρ ἅμα τρία πάντα πάρεστιν,  
εὐφροσύνην, καὶ ἔρωτα, καὶ ἥδυμον ὕπνον ἐλέσθαι.  
καὶ γὰρ ἐγὼ Μούσῃσιν Ὀλυμπιάδεσσιν ὀπηδῶς,  
τῇσι χοροὶ τε μέλουσι, καὶ ἀγλαὸς οἶμος ἀοιδῆς,  
καὶ μολπὴ τεθαλυῖα, καὶ ἡμερόεις βρόμος αὐλῶν,  
οἷα νέων θαλίσκας ἐνδέξια ἔργα πέλονται.  
ἀλλ' οὐπω τί μοι ὦδε μετὰ φρεσὶν ἄλλο μέλησεν.  
θαυμάζω, Διὸς υἱέ, τάδ', ὥς ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζεις.

## XVII.

## ODYSSEY. Book VII. vv. 185—218.

## ALCINOOS AND ULYSSES.

THEN rose Alcinoos and spake and said :  
“ Harken, Phæacian chiefs and councillors,  
That I may speak the thought that urges me.  
Each to his home to-night return and rest ;  
Then, summoning the elders on the morn,  
The stranger in our palace we will feast,  
With offering to the Gods, and thereupon  
Consider of his convoy, how our guest,  
Free from all labour and annoy, may go  
Under our convoy to his native land,  
Rejoicing, speedily, though far it be ;  
Nor suffer harm or evil by the way,  
Till on its soil he plants his foot ;—thenceforth  
Suffer he shall whate’er his lot ordains,  
And the dread Sisters in his life-thread wove,  
Their fateful spinning, when he cleft the womb.  
But,—if so be that an Immortal down  
From heaven hath come, our guest,—O, then be sure,  
’Tis some new mind and counsel of the Gods.  
For aye of old to us the Gods appear  
Plainly, when we high sacrifice perform,  
And side by side with us at feast they sit ;  
Nor do they veil their presence, if perchance  
Some lone wayfarer meets them on his road ;  
For we too are near neighbours of the Gods,  
Like the Cyclopes, and rude Giant tribes.”

## XVII.

## ODYSSEY. BOOK VII. vv. 185—218.

Τοῖσιν δ' Ἀλκίνοος ἀγορήσατο καὶ μετέειπεν·  
 “Κέκλυτε, Φαιήκων ἡγήτορες ἠδὲ μέδοντες,  
 ὄφρ' εἴπω, τά με θυμὸς ἐνὶ στήθεσσι κελεύει.  
 νῦν μὲν δαισάμενοι κατακείμετε οἴκαδ' ἴοντες·  
 ἠῶθεν δὲ γέροντας ἐπὶ πλέονας καλέσαντες  
 ξεῖνον ἐνὶ μεγάροις ξεινίσσομεν, ἠδὲ θεοῖσι  
 ῥέξομεν ἱερὰ καλά· ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ περὶ πομπῆς  
 μνησόμεθ', ὥς χ' ὁ ξεῖνος ἄνευθε πόνου καὶ ἀνίης  
 πομπῇ ὑφ' ἡμετέρῃ ἦν πατρίδα γαῖαν ἵκηται  
 χαίρων καρπαλίμως, εἰ καὶ μάλα τηλόθεν ἐστὶν·  
 μηδέ τι μεσσηγύς γε κακὸν καὶ πῆμα πάθησιν,  
 πρίν γε τὸν ἥς γαίης ἐπιβήμεναι. ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτα  
 πείσεται, ἄσσα οἱ Αἶσα κατακλῶθές τε βαρεῖται  
 γεινομένῳ νήσαντο λίνῳ, ὅτε μιν τέκε μήτηρ.  
 εἰ δέ τις ἀθανάτων γε κατ' οὐρανοῦ εἰλήλουθεν,  
 ἄλλο τι δὴ τόδ' ἔπειτα θεοὶ περιμηχανόωνται·  
 αἰεὶ γὰρ τὸ πάρος γε θεοὶ φαίνονται ἐναργεῖς  
 ἡμῖν εὖτ' ἔρδωμεν ἀγακλειτὰς ἐκατόμβας,  
 δαίνονταί τε παρ' ἄμμι καθήμενοι, ἔνθα περ ἡμεῖς.  
 εἰ δ' ἄρα τις καὶ μῶνος ἰὼν ξύμβληται ὀδίτης,  
 οὔτι κατακρύπτουσιν· ἐπεὶ σφισιν ἐγγύθεν εἰμὲν,  
 ὥσπερ Κύκλωπές τε, καὶ ἄγρια φῦλα Γιγάντων.”

Then spake the wise Ulysses in reply :  
“ Alcinoos, far other be thy thoughts.  
Not with Immortals, masters of wide heaven,  
In face and form I match, but mortal man  
With mortal men.—Nay, take what man ye know  
Most deeply to calamity enthrall’d,  
With him I’ll measure woes ; and more, and worse,  
Will yet remain to tell, which, one and all,  
I by the Gods’ high pleasure have endur’d.  
But grant me now, though in distress, to sup ;  
No direr evil than a craving maw,  
Which makes a man remember it perforce,  
Though with toil wearied, and forspent with grief.”

1879—1880.



Τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβόμενος προσέφη πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς ·  
 “ Ἀλκίνο', ἄλλο τί τοι μελέτω φρεσίν · οὐ γὰρ ἔγωγε  
 ἀθανάτοισιν ἔοικα, τοὶ οὐρανὸν εὐρὺν ἔχουσιν,  
 οὐ δέμας, οὐδὲ φυὴν, ἀλλὰ θνητοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.  
 οὔστινας ὑμεῖς ἴστε μάλιστ' ὀχέοντας ὀϊζὺν  
 ἀνθρώπων, τοῖσιν κεν ἐν ἄλγεσιν ἰσωσαίμην ·  
 καὶ δ' ἔτι κεν καὶ μᾶλλον ἐγὼ κακὰ μυθησαίμην,  
 ὅσσα γε δὴ ξύμπαντα θεῶν ἰύτῃτι μόγησα.  
 ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν δορπῆσαι ἐάσατε, κηδόμενόν περ.  
 οὐ γάρ τι στυγερεὴ ἐπὶ γαστέρι κύντερον ἄλλο  
 ἔπλετο, ἢ τ' ἐκέλευσεν ἔο μνήσασθαι ἀνάγκη,  
 καὶ μάλα τειρόμενον, καὶ ἐνὶ φρεσὶ πένθος ἔχοντα.”

## XVIII.

ILIAD. BOOK XXIV. vv. 598—620.

ACHILLES TO PRIAM.

“ Now is thy son released unto thee, sire,  
According to thy prayer ;—with earliest gleam  
Of morn, thou shalt behold him where he lies  
Low on his couch, and take him where thou wilt.  
But for to-night, of supper let us think.  
Not even bright-tress’d Niobe forbore  
Food, whose twelve children in her palace fell,  
Six daughters and six sons in bloom of youth.  
The sons Apollo, wroth with Niobe,  
Slaughter’d with arrows from his silver bow,  
The daughters Artemis, quick-darting queen,  
For that with beauteous Leto she compared :—  
Leto of two, mother of many she ;—  
So then they two did all her many slay.  
So nine days lay the bodies where they fell,  
Nor burial found, but Zeus made stones of men ;  
So the tenth day, the high Gods buried them,  
And then, worn out with weeping, she did eat.  
And now ’mid rocks, and on the mountains lone,  
On Sipylus, where sleep, they say, the Nymphs  
Divine, who dance by the Acheloïan stream,  
There, though of stone, she cherishes her woe.  
Wherefore let us, too, reverend sire, partake  
Of food together. Come there will a time  
For tears, when thou in Ilion hast thy son,  
Fit cause, and deep enough, of tears to thee.”

1879—1880.

## XVIII.

## ILIAD. BOOK XXIV. vv. 598—620.

“Υἱὸς μὲν δὴ τοι λέλυται, γέρον, ὥς ἐκέλευες,  
 κεῖται δ' ἐν λεχέσσ'· ἅμα δ' ἠοῖ φαινομένηφιν  
 ὄψαι αὐτὸς ἄγων· νῦν δὲ μνησώμεθα δόρπου.  
 καὶ γάρ τ' ἠύκομος Νιόβη ἐμνήσατο σίτου,  
 τῇ περ δώδεκα παῖδες ἐνὶ μεγάροισιν ὕλοντο,  
 ἕξ μὲν θυγατέρες, ἕξ δ' υἱέες ἡβώνοντες.  
 τοὺς μὲν Ἀπόλλων πέφνεν ἀπ' ἀργυρέοιο βιοῖο,  
 χωόμενος Νιόβῃ, τὰς δ' Ἀρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα,  
 οὐνεκ' ἄρα Λητοῖ ἰσάσκετο καλλιπαρῆψ.  
 φῇ δοιὼ τεκέειν, ἡ δ' αὐτὴ γείνατο πολλούς·  
 τὼ δ' ἄρα, καὶ δοιὼ περ ἐόντ', ἀπὸ πάντας ὄλεσαν.  
 οἱ μὲν ἄρ' ἐννημαρ κέατ' ἐν φόνῳ, οὐδέ τις ἦεν  
 κατθάψαι, λαοὺς δὲ λίθους ποίησε Κρονίων.  
 τοὺς δ' ἄρα τῇ δεκάτῃ θάψαν θεοὶ Οὐρανίωνες.  
 ἡ δ' ἄρα σίτου μνήσατ', ἐπεὶ κάμε δακρυχέουσα.  
 νῦν δὲ πού ἐν πέτρῃσιν ἐν οὔρεσιν οἰοπόλοισιν,  
 ἐν Σιπύλῳ, ὅθι φασὶ θεάων ἔμμεναι εὐνὰς  
 Νυμφάων, αἵτ' ἄμφ' Ἀχελώϊον ἐρρώσαντο,  
 ἔνθα, λίθος περ' ἐοῦσα, θεῶν ἐκ κήδεα πέσσει.  
 ἀλλ' ἄγε δὴ καὶ νῶϊ μεδώμεθα, δῖε γεραῖε,  
 σίτου· ἐπειτὰ κεν αὖτε φίλον παῖδα κλαίοισθα,  
 Ἴλιον εἰσαγαγόν· πολυδάκρυτος δέ τοι ἔσται.”

## XIX.

HADRIAN'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOUL WHEN  
DYING.

FITFUL, fondling, parting sprite,  
Guest my clay was fashion'd for,  
Where the regions of thy flight?  
Wan, disrob'd, thy antics o'er,  
Merry-making thine no more.

1876—1880.

## XIX.

HADRIANUS MORIENS ANIMAM  
ALLOQUITUR.

ANIMULA, vagula, blandula,  
Hospes comesque corporis,  
Quæ nunc abibis in loca ?  
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,  
Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos.



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